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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1 million (Office for National Statistics 1999). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 10.5 million by 2026, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 5.5 million (Office for National Statistics 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop services to meet the needs of older people, and a number of initiatives have been developed to address this need. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for older people, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the lives of older people. The strategy is based on three main principles: to improve the health and well-being of older people, to improve the quality of life of older people, and to improve the support and care available to older people.

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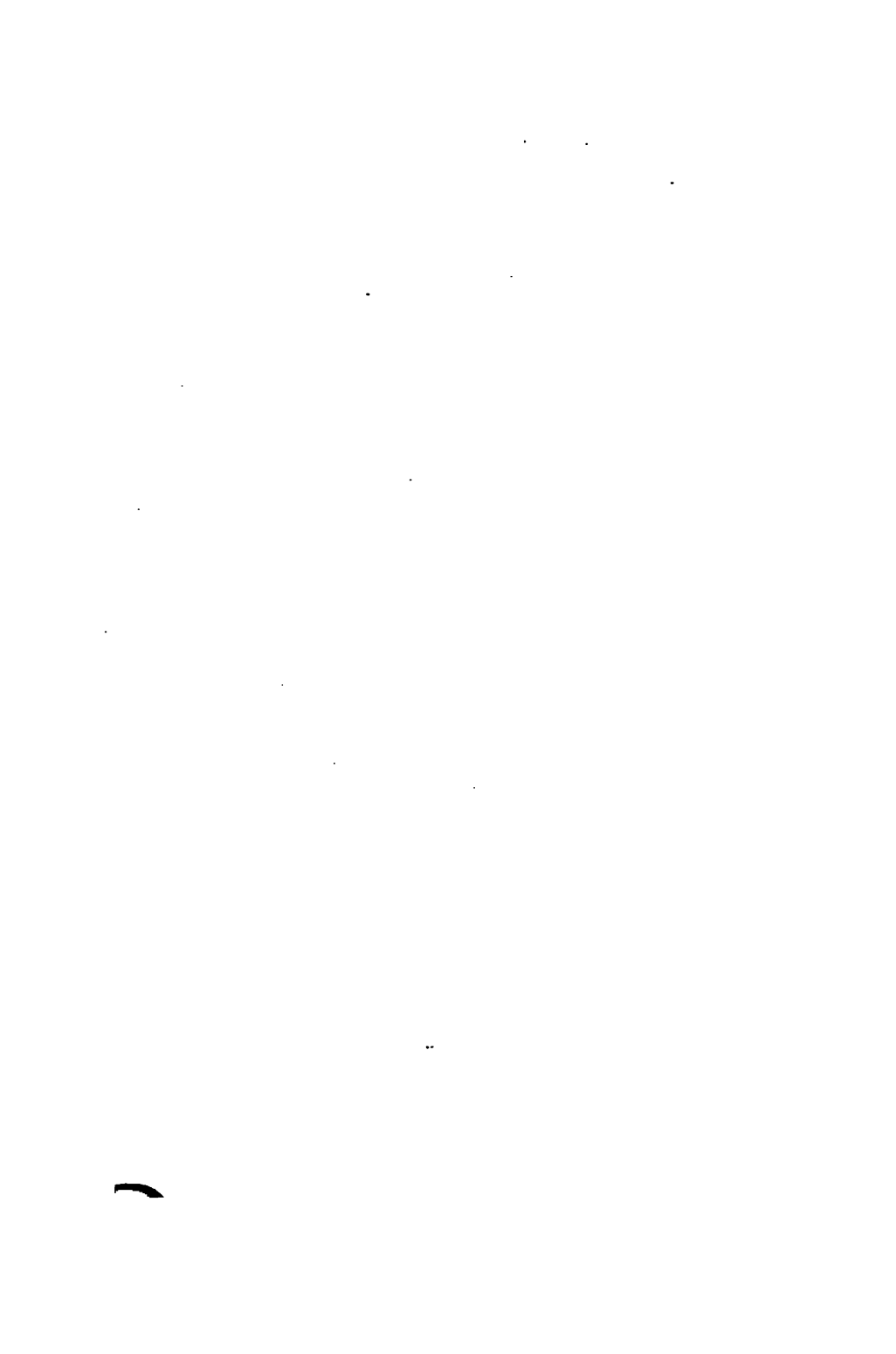
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C O N S T A N C E



CONSTANCE

A Tale



LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1877

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Errata.

Page 79, line 8, *for* 'thy' *read* 'that.'

„ 79, „ 9, „ 'thine' „ 'her.'

Notes 13 and 16—

For 'Of the Sikhs, only the fallen chiefs.'

Read 'Of the Sikhs, a few only of the fallen chiefs.'

Constance.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WITH the somewhat singular history of the following tale it might be impertinent to trouble the reader. It was written in 1831 ; but, as will be seen, the plot has been altered from its original conception to adapt it to after-events. The *dramatis personæ* being fictitious, the precise localities have been left in doubt. If faithfully described, they will be recognised by those who have visited our sanatoria in the Sub-Himalaya.

CANTO I.

HIMĀLA

CANTO I.

HIMĀLA.



I.

HAIL to the land where Nature's throne is pil'd
From Earth's green bosom to the azure sky ;
Where ev'ry breeze is pure and undefil'd,
And (Heaven inhal'd) life's tide up-sparkles high ;
And all is beauty that salutes the eye ;
And all is sweetness to the sense addrest,
In lapsing rills, and flow'rs that bloom and sigh,
And shadowy glen, and mount, whose snowy crest
Glows, in the delicate hues of Orient opal drest.



II.

High, thro' yon sapphire vault, the crests sublime
Of dread Himāla, diadem'd with snow,
Tower in their vasty might, disdaining Time,
And heedless of the world's vain ebb and flow.
O'er half a realm their length'ning shadows grow ;
But o'er those brows, in Heav'n that dwell, serene,
Not Hesper's hand his shadowy veil may throw ;
But brighter, warmer glows the roseate sheen,
Till all afire the snows where Winter reign'd supreme.

III.


Yet are those gorgeous towers and splendent spires
The drear abode of *him* whose name is gloom ;
Whose icy breath annuls life's genial fires,
Whose gladdest rays the corpse-lights of the tomb.
Not his those blushful tints profuse, that bloom,
As though Love held his feast of roses there :
But rays, Heav'n-sent, to thaw the icy gloom,
And wean the monster from his dark despair ;
Spurn'd from yon ramp sublime that walls his sullen lair.

IV.

Who hath explor'd those pinnacles of dread,
Those waves of Chaos, harden'd in mid-swell
To icy crystal? Not the fearless tread
Of clambering ibex, though he love right well
On dizziest peaks, 'mid madd'ning sights, to dwell;
Not eagle, strongest of the wings that soar:
The very thunder cares not oft to quell
Silence, sole audience of that region hoar;—
Death, her grim sire, heeds not, how hoarse soe'er the roar.

V.

He lists not—though the dismal caves of Hell,
Arous'd, have bellow'd out a stern reply.
He heeds not—though the frantic furies yell,
Their victims quit, and writhe their coils on high.
He heeds not, mightiest in his apathy.
What recks he of Life's turmoil, rage, or war?
He quells them with his lidless, sightless eye.
His den, up-pil'd above the Storm-Fiend's soar,
He bides the fated hour when Life shall throb no more.



VI.

There clings the avalanche. The glacier there,
In seas of icy slobber, creeps for aye ;
And Death, Life's¹ author, with reluctant care
Congeals Earth's bosom, lest those founts run dry,
When the parch'd offspring on their mother cry
For life, her teats gigantic yield no more ;
And Ganges', Jumna's floods in embryo die ;
And Abba Sind² be heard and seen no more,
From dread Aornos' roots to Ocean's surge-lash'd shore.

VII.

See, where they sentinel the Tyrant's den,
Yon giant phalanx, silent as their lord ;
Serene, immobile, passionless, as when
Chaos assign'd them first their watch and ward.
No respite, ages, wasting slow, afford
From their ice-panoply's life-curdling chill ;
Time rivets closer, aye, the clasp abhorr'd ;
And when Day's throne eternal Night shall fill,
Chaos, their watch who set, shall find them watching still.


¹ For notes, see end of book.

VIII.

There, swath'd in Ether, glistering keen with light,
The first in birth, the latest in decay ;
The clouds their foot-dust, and the planets bright
Their guests ; who, climbing aye the star-sown way,
Clust'ring around their snowy foreheads, play ;
As if, where Earth is else divorc'd of joy,
They near her linger in a fond delay,
And, being of Heav'n, account it sweet employ
To sing her promise sure of bliss without alloy.

IX.

Down in yon purple, fathomless abyss,
Where Shadow's soft'ning touch the whole is blending—
Rock, forest, flood, ravine, and precipice—
In one harmonious maze ; while, never-ending,
Deepens that vasty vista on our sight :
The eye enticing on thro' scenes transcending
All save the realm of Fay, youth's dream by night :
Till drown'd, daz'd, wilder'd in the rich excess
Of Nature's rare, excelling loveliness.



X.

Down in yon glen. Oh ! pierce its shades once more !
Far, far below, a silvery thread is winding,
With giant foliage grimly shadow'd o'er,
Its fairy clasp round many a mountain binding.
Seen—to be lost ; appearing yet once more ;
O'er rock and pebbled bed a pathway finding :
Till, where the forest-felted mountains pour
Their intersecting undules, lost for aye
In soft, deep shadows of obscurity.

XI.


And see, where o'er the ethereal³ gulf below
The last fair glance of parting day is streaming
Thro' the rent chain of hills, that circling throw
Their serrate links ; each purple summit gleaming
With its bright shield⁴ of cloud-descended light.
While on the horizon's utmost verge is beaming
(Where earth and heaven their viewless link unite)
The silvery thread which marks a wandering river's⁵
might.

XII.

Yon snow-clad mountains are a feast sublime
For soaring thought and contemplation high.
Yon rock-cleft precipice, whose wall to climb
The clinging lichen shuns her art to try ;—
Each hath its charm. But when thine aching eye
Seeks the relief of tears, its fire to quell ;
And when thy bosom fain would pour the sigh
O'er bygone memories—here thy gaze must dwell :
For beauty like to this claims kin with sorrow's swell.

XIII.

And treasur'd here, in musical accord,
All the past smiles of better days thou'lt find
Uprise around thee : yea, full many a word
Of those ye lov'd, ere Fortune prov'd unkind,
Shall float, in shadowy whisper, on the wind
Of yon deep valley—sadder than of yore,
But sweeter too. For man is ever blind
To present bliss, nor owns, save to deplore,
The treasure which alone fond Memory can restore.



XIV.

Then hither turn whene'er thy soul is sad,
And gaze thy sorrow and thyself away ;
And hie thee hither when thy heart is clad
In weeds of woe. When the long grim array
Of future years assails thee with dismay,
And daunts thy daring : come, but come alone ;
For 'tis a solemn act, which shuns the day
Of prying eyes, enduring only *one*,
That eye to whom Man's heart lies open, all and known.

XV.


How beautiful the cedar foliage, mass'd,
Forest on forest, from the mountain crest
Down to the dell, where never storm that pass'd
Might shake a dewdrop from its fragrant rest,
The wild Rose' innocent and artless breast :
Though the hoarse torrent plunge with thund'rous roar.
In scene, of Nature so profusely blest,
Where soul and sense their feeble grasp deplore,
Say, could the sated heart aught miss, or covet more ?

XVI.

Ah yes ! I miss, in memory cherish'd aye,
The village green to youth and maiden dear ;
The virgin spire,⁶ that, vanishing on high,
Like a pure vestal, sanctifies the air,
Growing, by contrast with its hue, more fair ;
I miss the peals of village bells remote,
Which to the Son of Toil kind respite bear,
And, as o'er hill and bosky dell they float,
Train, in sweet tangle mesh'd, full many a woodland note.

XVII.

How sweetly here their hallow'd chime might fall,
Soft as the dew-shower of the summer sky,
Down each deep glen, and thro' the cedars tall,
Breath'd in the murmur of young Zephyrus' sigh,
Mingling their music with the eagle's cry,
Waking ten thousand echoes from their trance ;
And Heav'nward floating, where the crag on high
Wooes the wild magic of the Lightning's glance,
Where, on each sportive gale, the fluttering moss-wreaths⁷
dance.



XVIII.

For though, to harmony attun'd, the heart
Will blend thanksgiving with each wood-note wild,
Its tribute to the incense pure impart
Of each coy flower, the mountain's artless child :
Yet sweet, 'mid offerings pure and undefil'd,
The general hymn of Nature's gentler Things ;
One vocal proof that not in vain hath smil'd
On Man a bounteous Heav'n ;—that he, too, brings
His censer to the shrine, and Heav'nward spreads his wings.

Thus, on Himāla's flowery breast reclin'd,
And fann'd by soft gales of the mountain wind,
Which round her brow gush'd lovingly to bless,
Health's glow still height'ning with each soft caress,
Young Constance mus'd ;—the while her eye survey'd
The wealth of glory 'neath her feet display'd :
Array sublime of forest, rock, and cloud,
And mountain, swath'd in Ether's purpling shroud.

Loos'd from his rein to graze the mountain brow,
His dark eye flashing 'neath the mane of snow,

That stream'd, dishevell'd by the mountain blast,
And swept the wild flower as he saunter'd past,
Her mountain steed, exulting to be free,
Cropp'd the wild herb or bounded o'er the lea ;
But, faithful to the hand that oft caress'd
His glossy neck, or smooth'd his fiery crest,
From each brief gambol back to where she lay
Turn'd his glad step and check'd his boisterous play ;
Droop'd o'er her brow his head and mane of snow,
And woo'd her loved caress, in whinnying murmur low.

In this fair spot, the westering orb of Day
Still found her lingering in a fond delay.
Drawn, as by spell, whene'er she roam'd alone—
The cause she dared not ask ; had blush'd to own,
Had conscience whisper'd, 'twas on this lone spot
She met, saw, valued, whom she ne'er forgot.

His the sole tongue, since o'er the deep blue sea
She'd watch'd Britannia's less'ning cliffs decay,
And from the isle of her nativity
Had wing'd the white-plum'd bark its venturous way,

And borne her from her childhood's haunts, afar,
To roam an exile 'neath an alien star :—
His the sole tongue had skill those depths to move, .
Where, ambush'd, lurks the young heart's sorcerer, Love.
And theirs the interchange of voice and smile,
And hearts that knew not, dream'd not yet, of guile :
Whose hopes were fresh, whose doubts were faint and few ;
Whose dream the Future's bright prospective view ;
Such as young Fancy paints, in hues too fair
The world's cold touch and blighting breath to bear.

There are, whose hearts were form'd for joys refin'd,
The pure, chaste transports of the soaring mind ;
Who better love the harmonies that rise
From Nature's bosom to the eternal skies,
Than all the strains, by Fashion hired, of Art,
To drown the still, small whisper of the heart.

For such, 'twere bliss to flee from Pomp's unrest
To Nature's smile benign and genial breast ;
Filling, in thought's domain, a glorious throne,
With wealth, and power, and subjects, all her own.

And if, perchance, some kindred spirit find

Her lov'd retreat ; and hovering, linger there ;
Instinctive drawn, by sympathy refin'd,
Her heart's lone commerce with the skies to share,
And breathe th' harmonious magic of a tone,
New, yet long lov'd and dream'd of, as her own :
How doubly sweet such solitude appears,
Which, mind, responding, answering mind, endears.
When, thought for thought exchang'd, and smile for
smile,
Time's flight, unheeded, wakes no care, the while.
Past, present, future centred in one spot,
And each cold doubt, each sadd'ning fear forgot.

Then, rich the glow of joyaunce and surprise,
Quick'ning the pulse and sparkling from the eyes :
As fancies, all our own, though unexpressed,
Spring, bright and finish'd, from the lips, lov'd best.
If foes turn lovers, in the hour of fear ;
If misery, hearts at enmity, endear ;
If streams, that rav'd in fury, when they met,
By brief, deep intercourse, their rage forget ;



If exile blunt the shafts, which hatred spends ;
What will not solitude like this, for friends ?

Yes ! child of Feeling. While the world is new,
And bright and beautiful, and thou art gay,
Feast on the scene unfolding to thy view,
Enjoy, possess, luxuriate, whilst thou may,
With thankful heart ; for bliss, so pure, so rare,
Life hath commission *once*, but once to bear.
And hours shall come, when all thy dream shall be
Of a bright past : that *is*, no more for *thee*.
When memory, fond regret, alone shall bring
Of Fancy's wild delight and heavenward spring :
Ere Doubt had chill'd, Experience numb'd her wing.)

Earth, still apparell'd in her loveliest dress,
Her charms may spread, to glad thee, or to bless.
And, hand in hand, to cheer thy steps, descend
The seraph Peace, and Hope, Man's heav'nborn friend.
But hope, nor joy, nor peace shall know the power,
To bring thee back this first, last, beauteous hour ;

In all its freshness, guilelessness, and sense
Of freedom, fondness, truth and confidence.
As well might Noonday study to distil
The gems Morn strews, all sparkling, o'er the hill :
Or rosy Summer strive, with smiles, to bring
Round her glad steps the lily hopes of Spring.

But now, o'er mount and cliff, o'er hill and tower,
The slanting sunbeams stream with less'ning power ;
Fade in gradation slow, or lingering, streak
With warmer tint, each snow-clad, mountain peak :
As, clos'd his bright career, his journey done,
Sinks to Earth's fond embrace, the Evening Sun.
In each deep glen, each vasty vale around,
Had settled gloom, increasingly profound :
Though, on the summit of each loftier hill,
Soft Twilight shed her beauteous halo, still,
Robing the grand in more imposing dress,
And lending beauty fourfold tenderness.

Tir'd of his savage toil and cloy'd with blood,
His homeward flight, the king of birds pursued,



Back to his crag, steep, bare and rugged, where
Hangs his dread eyry, propt on viewless air.
Bleak, fearful, dizzy, desolate and lone,
But dear to him ; his refuge and his home.
While, to the shady covert of the grove,
Return'd, on weary wing, the wandering dove ;
Close to his mate, in fond endearment, press'd,
And, faltering, sigh'd and cooed himself to rest.
The very clouds, that all the livelong day
Had swept, soft-shadowing, Heaven's effulgent ray ;
Their pinions clos'd, their glories laid aside,
Despoil'd of pomp and pageantry and pride ;
Have sunk to slumber in the vale below,
And lie, cold gleaming, as the wreathen snow, }
Pil'd by the winds, when wintry tempests blow. }

Warn'd by the gathering gloom, young Constance rose,
Her home to seek, ere night around her close ;
And to her lips the silver call applied,
To win, from pasture on the mountain side,
Her truant steed ; who, wheresoe'er he stray'd,
Had still that signal's shrilly note obey'd.

The sound rose eddying in the mountain blast,
From cliff to crag, in ceaseless echoes cast ;
Stirr'd, mid the crowd, the wild deer from his lair,
And scar'd from slumber deep the timorous hare :
But no glad neigh replied in answer shrill
Nor hoof-sound fleet wake echo in the hill
Again, more high the shrill summons rang :
Again the rocks rever'd the answering clang :
And yet again, dread harbinger of Night,
Silence, alighting from her transient flight,
Clos'd her soft wing and settled on the height !

And now the moss, the turf, the wild-flower sweet,
Feel the slight impress of her fairy feet :
As, in the bounding glee of youth, she springs,
Light, as though pois'd upon the Zephyr's wings,
Yet, in her search, oft pausing as she pass'd ;
Where droop'd the flower-germ, folded by the blast ;
To cull some bud, by Nature's bounty strown,
Whose fragrance breath'd of childhood and of home.

Vainly, along the mountain's rugged crest,
And round its brow, in anxious search she press'd.

Vainly her voice, in silvery tones, arose,
Too sweet to break the cushat's hush'd repose :
Tho' wafted far, and whisper'd o'er and o'er,
By each soft breeze that on its pinions bore,
From thickets, flowering o'er the mountain' breast,
The last faint sighs of roses, clos'd in rest.

The path ran, narrowing, o'er that giant height,
In devious curves, oft winding out of sight,
'Mid shrubs that gloom'd, as faded fast the dye
Of golden glory, from the Western sky.
Here Constance paus'd ; for, full in sight, there stood,
Where the shy path, emerging, left the wood,
Her palfrey, gazing, tranc'd, with eyes that glare
On some dire form, couch'd dim and silent, there.

High arch'd his crest, and wildly, o'er his brow,
Half stood, half stream'd, his mane of spotless snow ;
Contrasted, strangely, with th' unearthly dye
Of dark fire, blazing from his startled eye.
With forward foot and wide-expanded chest,
And weight stay'd, shrinking, on the haunch comprest ;

And every muscle, strain'd by terror's might,
Reveal'd distinct, and starting forth to sight ;
As sculptur'd marble, motionless, he stood :
Save that the fear-fraught current of life-blood
Shot thro' his frame (all-palsied with its swell),
The death belying, else portray'd so well.

With all th' instinctive eagerness of mind,
That hastes to seek what most it dreads to find ;
Her eye, pursuing, with the speed of light,
His glance ; met there an eye, so fierce, so bright,
That, as she gaz'd, her heart's warm tides grew cold,
And horror swath'd her, as in serpent' fold.

Still, still she gaz'd, till her dilating eye
Seem'd but to shrink, in each attempt to pry
Into the thicket's gloom ; and phantoms vain,
And vast, and shapeless, crowded on her brain ;
And her frail knees shook, nerveless ; as with slow
And stealthy motion, waving to and fro,
The thicket green betray'd th' encroaching foe ;



Or, yielding, gave to view, in snatches brief,
His spotted form, obscure,⁸ in dim relief:
As measuring still with crafty, cruel eye,
The 'minish'd space, he, step by step, drew nigh.
Still strangely spell-bound to the fatal spot,
The power, the will to flee, alike forgot ;
The body fetter'd, but the spirit free ;
Her thought, by turns, life, death, eternity ;
Her hands, in meekness, o'er her bosom prest ;
The frail flesh shuddering, but the soul at rest :—
Thus pass'd a period brief, yet ah ! how wide,
If by intensity of suffering tried !
And then a rush, a thunder-peal, a yell—
A still, deep hush : and terror's frenzying spell
O'erwhelming nature's might, she clos'd the eye
Which gaz'd in chill, unpicturing vacancy,
And sank, releas'd the while, in dreamless rest,
Pale, cold, and helpless, on the mountain' breast.

Stretch'd at her feet, in sterner slumber strow'd,
Her mighty foe lay, weltering in his blood ;
While o'er her knelt, absorb'd in anxious care,
The glorious Form, Heav'n-sent, in her despair :

Rais'd her fair head, releas'd from thrall confin'd,
And pour'd those rich, dark tresses on the wind.
While reeking lay, thrown careless o'er the heath,
The deadly car'bine, had arrested death.

'Twas eventime. That soft, bewitching hour,
When Love asserts, with tenfold sway, his power.
And gaz'd on her he'd sav'd, the bold St. Clair ;
And felt and own'd her, lovely, past compare.
And she, all grateful for life's boon, descried
In the majestic form, that grac'd her side,
One moulded fair, by Nature's matchless art,
To win crowns, thrones : she ask'd not ' Maiden's heart.'

And thus they wended to her mountain rest.
The sea of gold, fast ebbing in the West,
Hath left one gem, strown o'er Heaven's purpled shore.
Love's planet lights them. What would mortal more ?
Ah ! why should orb so lustrous feed its might
With heart-wrung woe, to baskers in its light ?

CANTO II.

ST CLAIR

TO ———.

I.

I SAW thee, in thy beauty's budding bloom,
A thing of Light, the wealth of ev'ry eye;
That scatter'd bliss around and banish'd gloom;
Proof-arm'd, Woe's darts to baffle or defy;
For Trouble vanish'd when thy step drew nigh.
And, if the blessing of the heart be pray'r,
Unnumber'd vows for thee went up on high;
And hourly thy sweet name was wafted there.
So hast thou, doubtless, 'scap'd th' envenom'd shafts of
Care.

II.

And who, to gaze on that pure, pencill'd brow,
Sparkling with life, drawn freshly from the soul;
That forehead, dazzling with its unsunn'd snow,
'Mid wild locks, tam'd by gentlest Art's control:
Black as the night-robcs of the starry Pole,

Which give the snows they circle, more to shine ;
That cheek, still varying as the smile that stole
Its dimpling talisman, from Beauty's mine ;
And that young, touching grace, words falter to define

III.

Who that had bask'd him in thy beauty's light ;
Sun-gleam to him of joyaunce and delight ;
Could dream, the source whence many hearts are blest,
Disturb'd by Care, or ruffled to unrest.
Yet, stars of Heav'n their influence sweet impart,
Each from her slowly, surely wasting heart.

IV.

'Tis when the urn is shatter'd, it pours forth
Its hoarded fragrance. 'Tis when thou hast riven
The new-found gem, thou shalt discern its worth,
In the rich hues by lavish Nature given.
'Tis when Night's gloom o'ercasts the sacred Heaven,
Flash forth her full-orb'd suns and worlds to sight :
And 'tis the heart, rent, gloom-opprest, and driven
Back on itself, by Woe's untimely blight,
Yields fragrance all undreamt ; reveals its tenderest light.

CANTO II.

ST. CLAIR.



MOONS wax and wane. An honour'd guest the while,
And very vassal of her glance and smile,
Young Constance sees her bold Deliv'rer move,
And, shrinking, meets an eye full fir'd with love.
Yes! shrinks and trembles. 'Tis no maiden fear,
Of love inspir'd, that thrills when he is near;
To whom a life she owes, would fain impart
The frank, free tribute of a grateful heart;
For e'en regard can scarce her will obey,
And kindlier thoughts expire in cold dismay.

Whether ner heart, unconscious of th' accord,
Allegiance yielding to another lord,
Held jealous vigil o'er the bosom throne,
Reserv'd and consecrate to him alone :
Certain it was, the potent charm confest
By other minds, fell powerless o'er her breast :
Where shadows cold, in self despite, intrude,
By candour blam'd, abhorr'd of gratitude.

To her his presence was a blighting spell,
That wither'd mirth, and check'd (she scarce might tell
Or how, or why) her ardent spirit's flow,
E'en to the verge of terror or of woe.
Not that of him she evil knew or deem'd.
Or judg'd him aught less noble than he seem'd.
Th' instinctive shrinking of her heart was still,
Despite her judgment and beyond her will.
Reason could nought that tremor strange control,
Nor pride allay that sinking of the soul.

Far else the general verdict. All admire
His stately mien, bland speech, and glance of fire,
And none more warmly than her own fond Sire ;

Who deem'd all guerdon small, his love t' attest ;
All praise, faint tribute to his matchless guest.
Whether the one or many err, declare
Ye who peruse this record of St. Clair.

Of long descent he came. His sires had won
Fame and broad lands 'neath Rollo's conquering son ;
But Time, th' ancestral shield ennobling, wore
From its rich blazon'd field th' ingrailing ' *Or* : '
And his stern sire had seen th' ancestral lands
Dispers'd and sold t' enrich ignoble hands.

Gath'ring his wealth's sad wrecks, he'd sail'd afar,
To seek fresh fortunes 'neath an Eastern star ;
Had won from Gallia's flag the lone domain
Of Kāli Dwipa, in the Indian Main :
A score of years fill'd there a petty throne,
Till England claim'd the conquest as her own ;
Her ruler sent, and, with unrighteous ban,
Had driven him thence—a wrong'd and ruin'd man.

In foreign land he'd died, bequeathing there
Vengeance, unholy dowry, to his heir ;

Who train'd by one that refuge erst had found
Long years with ancient foes on British ground;
Repaid th' intolerable debt with spite,
Which slaves aye nurse 'gainst liberty and right.

Thus grew the young St. Clair. His father's fate
His soul still goading to revenge and hate;
His *noble* friend still fanning high the flame,
Until to him, revenge life's breath became;
Each virtue blighting ere its roots could dart
Thro' the strong soil of his impetuous heart.

Goaded by this dire fiend, he'd sojourn'd long
T' acquire, at Northern Court, each Eastern tongue:
But more, the subtle, serpent craft to plumb,
Whose depths hide dark and silent as the tomb:
Whose mighty springs sap each devoted realm
With Discord's quag, ere surging to o'erwhelm.
Thence Persia, Khorussaun, and Sinde explor'd,
Master'd the genius of each barbarous horde:
The lying Persian, crouching to his lord;
Th' Afghaun, of oath more terrible than sword;

Whose armies, not for blows but perjury meet,
And scoundrel victory crowns the foulest⁹ cheat.
The wild Belooch, the Ghiljie's tameless might ;
Th' Huzāra, prodigal of guesthood's rite.¹⁰
These studied all ; to India's court he wends,
Arm'd with credentials from his Noble friends,
As one whom thirst for science drove to roam—
Man's race his citizens, the World his home.
Prompt to aid Science at her votaries' call,
The Viceroy, nought suspecting, sanctions all ;
Opes to his foot¹¹ each seal'd, forbidden door ;
Each vassal court gives freely to explore :
There stir Sedition's venom-fester'd dregs,
And drop, like Cockatrice, Strife's dragon eggs.


Foster'd with zealous care that spawn of Hell,
Ripe the dire embryo, chipping at the shell,
When 'mid Himāla's matchless wilds he found
One, whose rare graces stirr'd the depths profound
Of purer feeling, dormant in his breast,
And well-nigh charm'd each hateful fiend to rest.

Such was St. Clair. His form rose bold and grand,
A master cast of Nature's master hand.
A frame that toy'd with toil ; yet, at the close,
Unbent with ease, nor cumber'd in repose ;
Had noblest shown amid the ranks of war,
And still most graceful when the fight was o'er.
Faultless of mould, his features well-beseem'd
The hero race, of poets sung or dream'd.
Nor lack'd there eyes, to which his glance express'd
The zeal and ardour of a generous breast.
His was the eloquence that subtly wound
Its viewless thread, the hearer's heart around ;
Nor waken'd Reason, till the flatter'd Sense
Joy'd in its bonds and lov'd its impotence.
Some find content, th' applause to win, alone
Of loftier minds or spirits like their own.
But with St. Clair, each claim'd his several use,
From spawn of Oates to scion of the Bruce ;
Nor rested he while one remained unbound
By the strong spell, so easeful breath'd around.

Yet was there watchfulness in that deep eye,
Whose vigil close the well-school'd traits belie.

An eye, not keen, to startle or betray
The wakeful ambush lurking in its ray ;
But one that stealthily, yet surely, took
A thousand surveys in a single look,
From 'neath the covert of th' unbending brow :
And while it gaz'd the deepest motive through,
Could flash, responsive to the sally light
Of sportive humour—could be gay, be bright,
Be pensive, yet coil'd up within its guard ;
And, like the hooded serpent, most prepar'd
To strike th' unwary, when, with arching crest,
Entranc'd by music, it seems most at rest.
A glance, consummate art alone could sway ;
For, whosoe'er was subject to its ray
E'en a brief space (albeit unconscious) felt
As on his brain some spell of darkness dwelt ;
Which drank his secret thoughts and prob'd his care,
And laid his frailties and his follies bare.

His, too, the bland, the ever-ready smile :
(Distrust ye, aye, that specious mask of guile),
Which, as it shone, nor lighted up the eye,
Nor freshly sprang to life, nor joyously :




But shed a mortal chill from eye and lip,
Like ice-film settling round the stranded ship.

Who would explore Man's heart, choose not that hour
When Reason curbs it with her iron power :
But watch the unguarded impulse ; mark the mien
When mirth should sparkle ; and if smiles have been
Guests of those features, ere they quite expire,
Scan the transition with a glance of fire.
For many have, like Icarus, been known
To soar with grace on pinions not their own ;
Whose skill, exhausted in the upward flight,
Deserts, or fails them, at that per'ulous height ;
Whence, sudden hurled from light too dazzling far,
In deeper gloom they set, quench'd like some wand'ring
star.

Strain'd by some giant arm, the steely bow
Yields to the effort, stubbornly and slow ;
Waiting that effort's sure and swift decay
To reassume its form with tenfold sway.
And thus the darkest, stormiest soul may find
A brief submission to the master mind.

Yet, the strong effort that constrain'd it o'er,
Recoil to gloom more settled than before.

Oh! there be instincts given us from above
Which ope or seal the welling springs of love ;
Not at slow Reason's dictates, dull and trite,
But innate sympathy's diviner light.
Who but hath learn'd this rule-defying art,
This mystic schooling of the eye and heart ?
Which, like some bright star of the Magian's sky,
Informs his soul, he asks nor how nor why ;
And dashes in, with sunbeam's rapid might,
The truth or guile of all that meets the sight.
Blest instinct, guardian of the youthful breast,
Too slow to doubt, too ready still to rest
Its faith ; its hope, peace, happiness to stay
On each frail reed that blossoms to betray.
But for thine aid e'en Innocence must mourn
Her ruin'd peace, her heart with anguish torn,
And, all unconscious of the specious snare, }
Take to her heart the dove, so seeming fair, }
And wake to find th' insatiate vulture there. }



Have not I watch'd the flush of health decay,
The light step fail, the gay smile fade away ;
The bright eye change its spirit-stirring glow
For the deep, speechless eloquence of woe ;
And the warm heart, in Death's despairing chill,
Pine, languish, wither, flutter—and grow still ?

Yes ! thou whom still our village maidens mourn,
Beauty's young Blossom, by the rude gale torn.
Thou, whom our hearts so priz'd, they would have
given
Their last warm throb, to hold thee back from Heaven.
Dark was the path and wearisome the road,
And deep the sleep, and silent the abode ;
And all for us too swift the stern decree,
Which Love, misplac'd, devis'd, sweet girl, for thee.
Oh ! as we silent watch'd from day to day
Some fresh hue fade, some brilliance melt away :
While thy young spirit clung around the past,
And, thrall'd by Death, hop'd, struggled to the last.
And e'en when Heaven had lighted up thine eye
With fires too bright to live, too pure to die ;

And with that soft, but fatal flush, o'erspread
The pale sunk cheek, whence health for aye was fled ;
As though some angel o'er that shatter'd shrine
Had strown the rosebuds of a happier clime ;
We could not, dar'd not, think that delicate wreath
Bloom'd but to grace the gloomy brow of Death.

Still, hallow'd to my heart each plaintive song
Thou lov'st to sing, ere Death had still'd thy tongue ;
Each lay, predictive of thine own sad fate,
Which, while it made my young heart desolate,
Was sweet, was soothing to thy fever'd breath,
Because it hymn'd the poetry of Death.
And each fair, sunny spot, each meadow green,
Where thy last step of gentleness hath been ;
The turf thy form of wasted beauty press'd,
And the cold grave, where thou hast found thy rest ;
Dew'd with my lone heart's tears, are verdant found,
'Mid Memory's waste, a plot of hallow'd ground.

END OF CANTO II.



CANTO III.

THE PEAK OF TERROR

CANTO III.

THE PEAK OF TERROR.



THERE is a mount, whose thunder-splinter'd crest,
In mass supreme, stands sever'd from the rest,
Not by deep gulfs of savage gloom alone,
But, yet more widely, by th' appalling tone
Of wizard grandeur that around it reigns ;
Seeming to mark the bound, where Man's domains
Give place to those of solitude and dread,
And spirit-shapes, that haunt the mountain head.
The brightest sunshine, flooding all around,
The snowy peaks, the forest-felted ground,




But seems to add fresh blackness to the frown
With which that mount, o'er all the world, looks down.
High o'er the gloom-fraught void, outstretch'd beneath
(Rayless, unfathomed, as the gulf of Death),
Its dark side hangs, like some primeval wall,
Leaning to Earth and tottering to its fall,
Time out of mind : while each successive age,
That form'd, in turn, the terrible presage,
Hath o'er its brow pass'd idly as the air,
And left the mount, still frowning grimly, there.
And if at times, with weary pace and slow,
A storm climb upward from the gulf below,
And waste its fury o'er that summit lone,
It scares but Silence from her awe-pil'd throne.

Cresting its peak, the shrine, accurst is seen
Of Dòrga,¹² Death's inexorable queen :
Till late, appeas'd with dying infants' cries,
And infant blood, pour'd forth in sacrifice.
Here walk'd St. Clair. Night spread her shadows grim,
Worthy the hour, the scene, that mountain throne, of
him.

He paus'd awhile, in all the pride of one
Who stands on peril's giddy brink alone.
He downward gaz'd, where summit, chasm, wood,
Lay merg'd in chaos' boundless shadow-flood.
And all so still. The very torrent's brawl
Scales not that mountain's mightiest, scarping wall ;
Or, if uptost, on night gale's fitful swell,
From depth remote ; 'tis such a dreamy spell,
So faint, ethereal : rather might he feel,
Than hear the Siren o'er his senses steal.
And when it ceased, suspent the list'ner's breath,
And his heart paus'd, as though confront with Death.
So might *he* quail, o'er whose unguarded mood,
Some form of light should, unperceiv'd, intrude ;
Nor wake perception of her presence fair,
Till fast, too fast she fades, fails, melts in viewless
air.

He turn'd his eyes upon the Heaven above.
There all was calmness, purity, and love.
Seem'd it those fairy lights, so countless sown
O'er the blue vault, had language of their own ;



Silent and still ; yet deep as ocean's sighs,
And pure as lovelight of the Seraph's eyes.
In all that countless host, profusely spread
Around so wide, so richly o'er his head,
Full many an emblem bright may there be seen
Of that he was, perchance, or might have been.
But, all in vain, his eye may widely roll,
In search, from East to West, from pole to pole ;
Ere, of the thing he is, its glance shall rest
On one faint semblance : save, perchance, the breast
Of stern Aldebaran, the lone, the dire,
Scorching and blighted with his own heart's fire.

He paus'd. Perchance, one moment o'er his soul
Some gentler thought, some kindlier fancy stole,
And the stern plotter dream'd of hours when he
Was pure of heart ; in thought, in fancy free
From each dark impulse, that would goad him on
In madd'ning recklessness of right or wrong ;
Up the steep summit, tow'rd Ambition's throne,
And down the gulf, more surely still, her own.


Aye! many a wretch, whom Memory haunts to
bear

Thoughts, full of woe, of darkness, and despair,
In hour of stillness, passion's pause, will hear
The voice, long silent, vibrate on his ear
In accent small; but, would you ask how deep?
Go, search the heart that fails, the eyes that weep
Tears which, for many a year of scathing sin,
Had slept congeal'd, their secret source within;
Nor wak'd, till touch'd by tones remember'd well
From earlier hour, as those at whose sweet spell,
They'd left their crystal caves, fresh'ning where'er they
fell.

Perchance, the lessons of his childhood came
In that lone moment, coupled with the name
Of fond endearment, which, in boyhood's days,
Was breath'd in love, or falter'd oft in praise,
And never since hath sounded on his ear.
Perchance the smile, the glance, the voice so dear
To dawning reason, at that moment broke
From the still grave, and sadly beam'd and spoke.

If so, 'twas but a moment. From his face
Soon pass'd, of gentler thought, each soft'ning trace,
And, settling into darkness, grew the frown
Which wrung the brow, and weighed the eyelid down ;
And once again, in rallying sternness, stood
That dark, proud spirit, in his haughtiest mood.

‘Not this the hour for dreamers. ’Tis not now
To ponder o’er the past, and rack my brow
O’er that I was, or haply might have been,
Had winds prov’d fair, or ocean smil’d serene.
The past is wealth for triflers. All the power
Of ruling minds is centred in the hour,
Which *is*, t’ elude the falterer’s grasp, or be
Whate’er is will’d by sterner souls’ decree.
Can I forget a dying father’s woe ?
My country deem that land, which prov’d *his* foe ?
What, if my sires’ broad lands and honours won,
In days long past, with Rollo’s hero son ?
Birth, shelter, whatsoe’er might claim that land,
Their sons repaid with counsel, heart, and hand.



When that false land begrudg'd th' impoverish'd son
The island sov'reignty his sword had won
In Indian seas, and he, heartbroken, died ;
Who, then, that boasted, filial bond belied,
'Twixt her and him ? Fate calls, my choice to show :
True to my sire, I stand, his country's foe.
He shall be well aveng'd, when India's sky
No more shall see the red cross banner fly ;
And England, asking in the heart's despair,
" The avenger, who ? " is answered, " 'Tis St. Clair,
Son of your victim, of the man ye slew,
Heir to his wrongs, to his just vengeance, too."
No fanciful regret must cross my path,
No superstition mock my righteous wrath ;
The plunge once ta'en, I turn no recreant eye,
Nor dare to falter, till I fear to die.

‘ Then roll ye on, ye glorious orbs of light,
And thou, pale crescent, freely beam thy light ;
Pursue in peace your destiny sublime,
Alike unmov'd by change, unchill'd by time.

Ten thousand snows may sweep, with blighting wing,
This transient world ; ten thousand times may spring,
Fann'd by the vernal breeze, her genial powers,
In bounteous bliss of fruits and opening flowers.
But, nor the wintry storm shall scatter there
One bolt, o'er brows for ever fresh and fair ;
Nor Spring's soft breath be needed to release
Breasts wrapt in sunshine of eternal peace.

‘ And thou, fair Vision, who, if earlier known,
Might'st e'en have blent thy spirit with mine own :
Weak is the heart, still doubting to requite
Thy scorn, by triumph, in thy sweet despite.
Could'st thou have lov'd me, I, perchance, had bent
My stubborn will, and school'd me to relent ;
And love for thee had yet retrac'd each line
Grav'd by *her* hand, whose soul was pure as thine.
For love of one so glorious ne'er could rest,
With aught of discord, in the self-same breast ;
But thou, for each, hast seal'd the stern decree,
And my vast schemes left fetterless and free.’

He ceas'd, forsook the chasm's brink, and strode
Where, stack'd on high, a pyre of cedar stood.
A pistol fir'd amid the train, and ere
Its echo ceas'd, high rose thro' middle air,
Flame following flame, in awful splendour bright,
A vast, red torrent of destroying light.
The rocks, the crags, that blood-stain'd temple lone,
The mighty cedars of the Death Queen's throne,
All kindling, sudden, in that lurid ray,
Gave back the hues of Orcus' dismal day,
If that *be* day, o'er which the sun's warm smile
Ne'er kindled hope, nor sparkled to beguile.
Some isle of light it seem'd, amid a sea
Of gloom intense and dire profundity ;
Bright, but to stain with blacker hue, the tide,
Beneath how deep, around how vast, how wide.
And he, that stern one, basking in the glare,
A brow, where pride scarce triumph'd o'er despair :
Still numb'ring rays of beauty's squander'd dower,
Like rainbow streaming o'er some ruined tower ;
Seem'd the wild genius of that scene so lone,
Its mountain pomp, deep gloom, and fiery throne.

From the fierce blaze he turn'd, and when his sight
Had slow recover'd from th' all-blinding light,
Which drown'd its powers ; beheld a triple ray
Spring up, respondent, far in space, away,
On one lone peak that, like a watch-tow'r, frown'd,
Where the blue mountains meet the champaign ground.

‘Tis well. I read the preconcerted sign,
That all keep tryst with me, at this lone shrine,
Awful alike in Sikh and Hindoo eyes,
Where claim'd Death's Queen her Hellish sacrifice.
So far we prosper. 'Tis but now to keep
Our counsel close ; while, all supinely, sleep,
In dreamless confidence, without a care,
The *watchful* guardians of a realm so fair.
Then rule in peace, proud Isle, thy virgin throne,
And walk the waves, so fondly styled thine own ;
And plough thy furrows o'er the waste, salt sea,
Whose womb still teems with tempests sown for thee.
But, to a race more happy, leave to till
The land ye rule so well, yet guard so ill.

Nor gaze with envy, when the East shall pour
Her boundless wealth, thy heritage no more,
Into his lap, who'll deem the costly prize
Well earn'd with wakeful care, well kept with sleepless
eyes.

‘ And yet, there was a time, when to this ear,
“ Home, country, friends,” waked echoes passing dear,
When, back return'd, my heart would bound to reach
Those white cliffs, towering o'er the surf-sown beach,
And my glad step caught life and power once more,
From each pulsation of my native shore ;
And my glad heart, inebriate, drank the sound
Of those wild billows ; and my spirit found
A bliss ungovern'd, words could ne'er express,
At once too sweet, too sad for happiness ;
In the deep, heart-appealing sense they bore,
Those sounds, of Freedom and my native shore.

‘ But yonder voices tell, or much I err,
Their near approach for whom I tarry here.

Their speech will farther show. Vain thoughts, begone !
Stern be his brow, of whom stern deeds are done.'

Three panting forms, emerging from the gloom,
Now cross'd the space those crackling fires illumine.
The strong glare backward cast their shades, and bright
Limn'd each swart feature on the scroll of night.

First in the race, as 'twere but pastime light
For mortal foot to scale that Heav'n-rear'd height,
With not one sob his toil intense to show,
And head erect, too proud, thro' toil, to bow ;
Clad in the simplest garb, whose scanty fold
Display'd each limb of stark and sinewy mould :
Where to a dwarfish stature Nature's art
Had join'd the giant's head, the lion's heart ;
And limbs, not vast, yet stamping on the sight
A sharp, high impress of excelling might—
The foremost claim'd ¹³ those mountains for his own,
Or hills as mighty, scenes as wild and lone ;
Where Nature travails in her wondrous might,
O'erwhelms the fancy, captivates the sight,

Breathes buoyant health in every gale that blows ;
And, to defend her paradise from foes,
Musters her boldest spirits round her throne,
With hearts and hands that well can guard their own.

Rearward some space—withheld, perchance, by pride,
Or limbs unpractis'd on the mountain side—
Of slender build, tall form, and crafty mien,
With turban'd brow and vest without a stain,
Of hue as spotless as the treasur'd snow
On Nunda's¹⁴ peak, and beard of ample flow,
Whose raven folds, descending o'er the breast,
Bore strong, mark'd contrast with his snowy vest.
The second, native seemed of softer zone
Than claim'd his hardier comrade for its own.

The third, with faltering step and drooping crest,
O'erworn with toil, lagg'd far behind the rest ;
A lean, lithe form, with eye that sought the ground,
Or, stealthy, trail'd its furtive glances round.

Bold warriors all. Yet each, as he drew near,
Own'd a strange thrill (of awe, perchance, not fear),

A sense of impotence to meet the might
Which hid its vast, unfathom'd springs from sight.
And he, that master spirit, who but now
Struggled with thoughts that rack'd his iron brow,
Serene and cold, as though uprais'd afar
O'er feeling's sway and passion's heady war,
With lion-like high courtesy express'd
To each his greeting bland; and thus address'd :

'Hail! gallant friends! Successful, if aright
I read you thro' that star the mountain height.
'The good old cause of freedom prospers still,
And thro' with quenchless fires wide plain and giant
hill.'

'Well hast thou read the tale those fires declare.
'True to the vengeance fiercely smouldering there,
Each mountain chief; and (where you farthest chain
Of blue hills mingles with the boundless plain)
Each border lord impatient lists to hear
The gathering call, and see your bands appear

From the far North. No lack of zeal we spy,
But dread some outbreak ere that aid be nigh.
But, rest assur'd, we join no rash emprise,
Nor rush on certain death with hoodwink'd eyes :
Though minish'd, we our freedom yet retain :
We risk not right so precious, worlds to gain.
When o'er the Stronghold¹⁵ of these Lords of War
England's dread banner flings its folds no more ;
When, to a man, the Sipahi host unite
'Gainst those who've fed, train'd, led them to the fight—
Then, not till then, expect our aid to know.
Our meed, the plain spread garden-like below,
Hence and from high Nepaul, till Ganges lave
To bless our border with her sacred wave.
Yea ; and this mountain realm we erst possess'd,
From Surjoo east to silvery Sootlej west.
Such our conditions. These confirm and sign,
And yon fair Eden of the East is thine.
These venture to infringe ; and tho' ye scale
Yon lifeless ridge, where wintry snows ne'er fail,
Or base your empire on the burning zone
Of yon red star—this hand shall pluck it down.'

Scarce died upon the night the Goorkha's word
Ere caught and echoed by that border lord,
Ruler, erewhile, of all that wide domain
Where five-arm'd Indus ploughs the subject plain.
'The Lions¹⁶ of the plain, whose rallying word,
Whose boast, whose bride, whose freedom is the sword ;
Whose couch the saddle, and whose staff the spear ;
The shield their cradle ; yea, those notes of fear,
The shock of charging hosts, th' inspiring song
Whose music brought their infant slumbers on :
Whose number, six score thousand warriors, all
Implighted deep to conquer or to fall,
By the blue steel they worship. Men of pride,
Impetuous, fiery, as the steeds they stride :—
These all await the signal from afar
To gather, rally, reap the ranks of war.
But no fantastic scheme, no idle breath
Can lure our children to the feast of death ;
Nor will they shed their dearest blood in vain,
To loose the yoke, yet rivet fast the chain.
Freedom we covet, and we *will* be free ;
No price too high for heav'n-born liberty.

Yon glorious Land, where five-arm'd Indus flows ;
Cashmeera, blooming 'mid eternal snows ;
Peshawur,¹⁷ the door to Pushtoo-speaking men ;
Mālwa's¹⁸ deep glebe ; Huzāra's¹⁹ lion den—
Ours all by right. But e'en this glorious prize
Will tempt in vain our warrior hosts to rise,
If 'tis to build anew that hateful throne²⁰
'Neath which our bleeding sires pour'd forth the groan.
Despite conflicting rights, our iron chain
Hath left deep scars. Men bless the British reign.
Though he,²¹ the master architect, whose mind
From chaos crude that system fair combin'd,
Hath left (with tears pursued) the realm he bless'd :
His brother's vigour awes the land to rest ;
And men his choice, akin to him in soul,
Hold o'er the Moslem tribes supreme control.
The prospect dazzling, Delhi's spoil to share
(Long years the burthen of our daily prayer),
Will 'mong the Khālśa²² loyalty maintain.
Our chiefs disperst, incarcerate, or slain ;
Our land disarm'd with shrewd and searching art ;
Dread Britain's terror cold around each heart—

Hope nought from us, till, thronging from afar,
Bursts thro' the Khyber gate your Northern war;
Or o'er red Hooghli's corse-encumbered flood,
Floats your broad banner,²³ bathed in British blood.'

Then spake that serpent type of human kind,
The Māhāratta of the crooked mind,
His lean, lithe form upwrithing into sight,
Lit by the glare of that vast jet of light.
That drooping brow, those grov'ling eyes²⁴ decline
To face Heaven's starry, solemn choir divine.
Their cruel glare, their joyless, charnel light
Seek the vile dust, enshroud in welcome night.
Snake-like he mov'd, cold, serpent-like his wrath,
As from long leathern lungs his speech hiss'd forth.

'Ere to our Land these pale-faced Outcasts came,
Two States of Hind soar'd high in kindred fame.
By myriads thronging forth to whelm his foe,
From Kistna's banks to Delhi and Lucknow;
O'er throne and State the proud Māh'ratta rode,
Plunder his income, and his pastime blood.

Before him Earth, a garden, bloom'd to sight :
Behind, a desert, and the gloom of Night.

‘ There, from his mountains of eternal snow,
The Goorkha sallied, lion-like, below ;
Made all the mountain skirt his prey at will :
And back return'd, unchalleng'd, to his hill.
Princes there were, indeed, of Moslem strain,
But fall'n from manhood ne'er to rise again.
A score of years had seen the Hindoo reign
Restor'd, from Atuk to the Indian Main.
Then came these Outcasts—all the world's sleek heirs ;
They came, saw, coveted :—and all was theirs.
They kept the treaties we so frankly broke,
Till all men gladly bow'd beneath their yoke.

‘ This seeming faith they held some fourscore years,
Till lull'd all doubts, and hush'd to rest all fears.
All potent they, all powerless we were grown.
Now dropt the mask, they brain us one by one.
Sinde first they seiz'd, in solemn treaties' spite,
Jhānsi, Berār, next felt their lawless might.

Now, richest (feeblest, in that he had won
By loyal faith the priv'lege of a son,
Leaning, defenceless, on a father's breast),
Oude may this year suffice their maw to feast.
Digested Oude, in Gualior and Indore
They'll snuff misrule :—and we exist no more.
Their life is death to other States ; and we
But live in earnest when they cease to be.

‘ Ripe for revolt ;’²⁵ their arrogance full blown :
Forts, treasure, ars'nals, British lives their own.
By British law contempt for Britons taught,
The Sipahi ranks scarce tarry to be bought.
This rape of Oude, their home and cherish'd rest,
Where each, erewhile, patrician weight possess'd,
Hath stirr'd the smother'd fire. Our agents, sent
Throughout their ranks, fan, feed the discontent.
“ If they with kings their solemn plight disown,
Why hold it sacred with their troops alone ?
See how their magic webs our Land with wire,
Thro' which their mandates flash in levin fire.

A web of iron roads progresses fast,
For fire-borne cars, that mock the lagging blast ;
And Indus', Ganges' sacred breasts are torn,
With fire-ships, holding wind and tide in scorn.
Our land thus fetter'd ; ere a year be flown,
Should they, caste, faith, command us to disown,
What answer ours ? See, new-coin'd laws deny ²⁶
Old rites : and Brahmuns' daughters ²⁷ spouseless die.
Whilst holiest fanes are plunder'd of their lands,
Bequeath'd, of yore, by pious hearts and hands.
And many, noble (blameless, yet of Fate,
By British law, in jails incarcerate ;)
Their caste, their honour wreck'd, ²⁸ thenceforth are driven,
Outcasts on Earth, without a place in Heaven.

‘ This strong array of facts, none dare deny,
Hath rous'd the Sipahi from his lethargy.
The plea, long lacking for revolt, is here :
And, when your armies from the North appear ;
Or, waving o'er Calcutta's captur'd hold,
The banner green flings far its silken fold :

Five hundred thousand warriors own the sign,
And blot from Earth, th' accurs'd of wrath divine.

‘ This year completes the hundred years of sway,
Assign’d these lords, by prophets of to-day.
Bread have we sent, throughout th’ astonish’d land ;
Mysterious gift of unknown Ruler’s hand.
The present Lords, incens’d, the gift disown.
And hence, all hearts expect a change of Throne.
For “ Bread-bestower ” ²⁹ is the title dear,
By which we, aye, our Native kings revere :
And who would Heav’n’s destroying vengeance brave,
A Heav’n-doomed Race to succour, or to save.

Workshop of treason, on a scale so grand,
Would not dishonour Vishwakurma’s ³⁰ hand ;
Calcutta yields her palaces and halls,³¹
Her crowded marts and consecrated walls.
There, from each ravag’d throne, each vanquish’d State,
That swells the pomp of this dire potentate ;
Kings, princes, chiefs, of diverse race and creed,
But all, in one harmonious faith, agreed,

The thirst for vengeance ; focuss'd all their fire,
With agents mask'd of foreign States, conspire :
With sly Vuk-eels, infect of treason's itch,
And lawyers vile, offscourings of the Ditch.³²
Maun³³ Singh from Oude : from his embattled throne,
The wily king of serpents hied him down.
Writh'd thro' the Sipahi ranks his coils sublime,
And pale Calcutta surfeited with slime.
His unctuous glide, sleek parasites attend,
Obsequious, lauding England's slippery friend.

‘ Our brother,³⁴ Singh, contemns a Moslem throne.
Can any scorn burn deeper than our own ?
This White Disease³⁵ once purg'd from out our land :
(For, not a soul must 'scape th' avenging brand),
No power the Moslem boasts,³⁶ save that *we* give :
Our fiat slays, or bids the suppliant live.
He lives, our vassal, while we need his hand.
That need fulfill'd, we blot him from the land.’

Replied St. Clair : ‘ Brave Chiefs, your claims are just,
Allow'd, secure ; if marred not by distrust.

Resistless force is ours, in one combin'd.
If scatter'd, idler than the idle wind.
If any hesitate ; the whole are lost.
The British lion slumbers on his post.
No risk is yours, if hush'd your purpose stand,
Till Fate yield up their Stronghold³⁷ to our hand.
All will, as one, that signal glad obey,
From Ganges' springs to Ocean-lash'd Cambaye.
But fail your plots that Fortress to surprise ;
No less must all, as one, together rise.
Take sign from him, who first unsheathes the brand,
And let your war-blades lighten all the Land.
Know that ye strike with Fate ; by whose decree,
Your Land, this year, is fetterless and free.
In sign of this, decreed the³⁸ comet dire,
That soon, o'er Heav'n, shall wave its brand of fire :
Portending blood and misery and wrath :
Where rising, o'er those nations of the North.

‘Taught by the timorous counsels of the State,
Themselves to deem, sole arbiters of Fate ;


Back'd and abetted, in contemptuous slight
Of those, whose sires, their sires had led to fight,
(Late so rever'd) ; the Army waits but plea
To rise in mass, and set the Empire free.
Throughout their ranks, each mind of firmer mould
Is ours, by bribes of dignities or gold.
These lead the multitude, with hoodwink'd eyes ;
Or all, by one bold outrage, compromise.

‘To aid our vast design, the frozen³⁹ North
Her hardy legions pours, resistless, forth.
Their progress slow, though sure, 'mid wilds, scarce trod
By foot of man : grim famine's dire abode.
Miss not your blow, by waiting for their aid :
Needless, if nigh : delusive, if delay'd.
But, seize the hour : strike ; win ; the booty share ;
Ere foreign claims each portion grand impair.
Strike without fear. Fate falls, in every blow,
And by these lips, foredooms your heedless foe.’

That mountain-chief, impatiently, the while,
Scarce veil'd his scorn, beneath a dubious smile.

His breast seemed lab'ring to give utterance free
To thoughts and words ; which some dark mystery
Of superstitious awe, controll'd and bound :—
Until, his boiling indignation, wound
Beyond restraint, the tide of passion broke
All bounds ; and thus, a child of Nature spoke,

‘ And who, and what art thou, dark man, that would
Thus sway the counsels, and control the flood
Of rushing armies ? Does not that smooth tongue,
E'en to the language of the realm belong,
To which devote, our vengeance ? Must it be
For mountain hearts, to knit their faith with thee ?
What ! hast thou never felt the wild, free beat
Of the proud pulse : when, fresh beneath thy feet,
The turf, the soil of thine own native coast
Seem'd more elastic, than the wide world's boast ?
When Heav'n spread fairer o'er thee : when the air
Seem'd purer, freer, healthier, than elsewhere ;
The grove had nobler music : and the sound
Of the bright brook, most eloquently wound



Its song of freedom, to the inmost cell
Of thy mute heart :—and forest, flood and fell
Told the same stirring legend, with a sound,
That made the pulse shoot quick, th' exultant spirit bound
Who, and what art thou ?'

 ' Who, or what is he,
Who taught your freeborn hearts, to pant for liberty ?
Who call'd yon Northern army from afar ?
And, while the Heav'n grew black, with stormy war ;
Lull'd the pale, island hearts in slothful ease ;
And on the gale of Death, still whisper'd "Peace!"
Ask ye my nature ? Read it in the blaze
Of this red beacon, which o'erwhelms your gaze
With might resistless ! Read it in the path
Of yon wild meteor. Read it in the wrath
Of that dire comet, doomed t' affright the Earth,
As erst, when o'er the fateful spot it stood,
Where a pure angel bless'd her infant's birth ;
While, others augur'd violence and blood.'

He spake in low, deep accents, yet his words
Grated, like thunder, on the inmost chords

Of each scar'd heart. And, on each startled eye,
His form, dilating, seemed in height to vie
With the dark cedars, that affront the sky.
Such the strong spell to awe, control, or blind,
Which Passion lends the high-strung master-mind.

‘But fear ye not,’ he added. And the tone
Seem'd from that lurid, fiery jet, to come :
In accent small, yet all distinct, it broke ;
And nerves of iron shudder'd, as he spoke.
‘But fear ye not. My power is all your own,
Spent in your aid, and freedom's cause, alone.
Sent down to Earth, to work Fate's stern decree,
The Spoiler spoil ; and set an Empire free.
Waste we not words. Time fleets ; and Time is power,
And life, death, Fate, abide the lapsing hour.’

In solemn form, around the blazing pile
Those warriors sat, debating deep, the while,
Each several act of project dire and grand ;
To which they pledg'd themselves, in heart and hand.

Men, all, of temper sage and reason clear ;
Old in intrigue ; till now unchill'd by fear.
Yet each, at times, with daunted spirit, stole
A glance at him, who was, indeed, the soul
Of that vast enterprise : yet, seem'd to scorn
All rank, of mortal Arbitrators borne.

Men more in action conversant, than word,
Whose hands less skill to wield the pen, than sword,
Soon seal⁴⁰ their treaties. Ere a watch was flown,
St. Clair, once more, sat, silent and alone,
O'er those red embers : picturing, in decay,
Ambition's fiery, soul-corroding ray.

‘ Pass they in peace ; betrayers and betray'd.
Idiots to deem, Man e'er bestow'd his aid,
His blood, time, talents, for th' applause of knaves,
O'er tyrants humbled, or enfranchis'd slaves.
Aye ! when resolv'd, each gentle bond I burst,
To slake dire Vengeance' soul-consuming thirst ;
Ambition prompted, I should best fulfil,
By her strong aid, the purpose of my will.

No second part, assigns that will, to me ;
No tool of despot, slave of king to be.
Thrones had not brib'd me, such as monarchs raise
And easeful fill, in these degenerate days.
One mighty crime, if crime it be, to rise :—
Then, swerve no more my pinions, from the skies.
But all shall see, confess, I hold mine own ;
My rightful empire, my predestin'd throne.
Yea ! And shall bless the even-handed sway,
Impartial justice, warm'd by Mercy's ray :
Nor marvel more, that I assert my right ;
Than, that the Sun climbs heav'nward, in his might.
This were a prize, indeed. No dull repose
Of sceptred indolence. But, life that knows
The fullest, freest scope for all its powers ;
And counts its days and numbers up its hours,
By deeds, whose praise, for good or ill, shall last,
When Time's last sands are dwindled out, and past.'

END OF CANTO III.

CANTO IV.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.



I.

O MOUNTAIN Breeze, thou wavelet, from the Main
Of sapphire, folding Earth in Heav'n's embrace ;
For realm so glorious, dost thou, not in vain
Forsake, awhile, thy star-sown dwelling-place ;
Caressing fond, to fresher glow and grace,
Young Nature's myriad charms. Thy wing of bliss
Sprinkles the dews, suspent in twilight space,
Which flowers exhale on high, and planets kiss :
Then, redolent of Heaven, in sparkling showers dismiss.

II.

Dear Nature,⁴¹ lov'd, when yet my heart was new
To the warm throb, since known and felt, too well :
Thou hast been, ever, to thy votary, true,
When vows, more fervid, falter'd in 'farewell :'
And, at thy bosom, have I own'd the spell
Of kindred, sympathy, with thee and thine ;
E'en when my breast against thee would rebel,
And chide thy loveliness and grace benign,
As, seem'd it, peace and joy could never more be mine.

III.

And when, dishearten'd with the World's alloy,
And sick of self, I back to thee have flown ;
Thy voice of stillness shed a calm, pure joy,
Appeasing discord. It was thou, alone,
Could'st harmonize the jarring bosom' tone :
For thou dost ever, with unwearying cheer,
Smile, when I smile : yet frown'st not, when I frown ;
Thou minglest rapture, with the very tear,
Which falls, I ask not why, when only thou art near.

IV.

Yet, though, in such majestic pomp of grace,
Thou ne'er, till now, hast beam'd upon my sight ;
There is a Land, where I was wont to trace
Thine every charm, with more intense delight :
For there, to loveliness didst thou unite
The siren tongue, the legendary lore,
Had thrill'd our sires, from chase return'd, or fight.—
Their bold, firm footprints sanctify thy shore :
Their fame, their deeds, their dust, thine heir-loom ever-
more.

V.

Here be no records of mine early hours ;
No bright memorials of my golden years ;
No names, stem-graven, 'mid thy fairy bowers,
Of those, who've shar'd my rapture and my tears.
Babbles thy brook : but not of hopes and fears,
That sway'd, when life was yet a maze untrod.
Its flower-sown marge no memory fond endears :
Ne'er hath my young foot stemm'd its mimic flood.
Nor thy coy Echo, rous'd, my gleeful shout pursued.

VI.

What, though thy Breeze hath wander'd far and free,
And swept the star-gemm'd canopy on high,
And sipp'd th' empurpling ether :—till, like Bee,
Fraught with the nectar'd freshness of the sky,
It faints, from very fullness of its joy,
Droops the bright wing, inebriate with delight,
And whirrs, in bounding bliss of freedom, by ;
Hums its wild lay, and speeds its homeward flight,
To realms, of Man untrod ; too blest for mortal sight.

VII.

Can the vast concave of thine airy hall
Its starry, sapphire vault unplumb'd above,
Replace for me the roof and woodbine wall,
Where childhood lisp'd its cov'nant sweet of love ?
Can the wild pomp of thy majestic grove,
Its column'd aisles and leaf-inwoven bowers,
Repeal the haunts, erst tenanted of Love,
In life's blithe Spring of sunny gleams and showers,
And wealth of worlds untrod, and fresh, untarnish'd
powers ?

VIII.

Wild is thy breeze : and, on its rapid wing
A few soft notes of earlier days are borne ;
The cuckoo's welcome to reviving Spring ;
The blackbird's joyous carol, from the thorn ;
Flora's sweet breath,—heart-incense to the Morn.
They cheat my fancy, with a long array
Of youthful hopes and memories, crush'd or torn ;
Sad, sacred records of an earlier day,
When the lov'd eyes were bright, the loving hearts were
gay.

IX.

Yet thee I blame not, Nature, when thy page,
As here, no legend of the Past can tell,
How Man, alike in every state and age,
Hath wide-diffus'd his soul-degrading spell,
Slave to the lust of conquest ; which can quell
Whate'er of Heav'n, Earth's tarnish'd breast retains.
Where Cæsar triumph'd, Man's high charter fell,
Deep is the moral : and the cold remains
Of Pomp tyrannic, awe ; like the dull clank of chains.

X.

But, Nature, Freedom, are not ye the same ?
Or *but* twin offspring of the same high sphere ?
Is there a tongue can utter Nature's name,
An eye behold, as I behold her, here,
In her wild pomp ; nor feel, supremely dear
The sense, the consciousness, that he is free ?
Free as the Heav'n-born breeze, the streamlet clear,
The bird, the wild deer, and the mountain bee,
And each uncultur'd flow'r, and each unmutilated tree ?

XI.

For fellowship, though but in misery,
To Man's all-sordid soul, were something worth :
And here must Man the only bondsman be,
And drag his chain alone, and tread the Earth,
Less blest than that, decreed him, at his birth,
As his wide heritage.—Oh ! bonds were here
As crime in paradise :—or 'mid the mirth
Of heartless levity, the sudden tear
Of Memory, wak'd to wail o'er Hope's untimely bier.

XII.

Would not that wild bird mock him with her song
Of joy and freedom? Would not that wild Bee
Seem to exult o'er him, who drags along
The fetter'd footstep of Captivity?
Would not the bounding deer, the rock-goat be
An emblem, each, of that, he ne'er must know?
And, girt around with freedom and the free,
Would not the very Breeze, that spurns his brow,
Mutter the same dark tale, in mournful note and low?

XIII.

Oh! if Man *must* be wretched; be it there,
Where gloom abides, and birds forget to sing:
On the lone borders of the Dead sea, where
Nature her tomb hath built;—whence, living Thing,
Abhorring, shrinks, instinctive;—which the wing
Of airy habitant ne'er ventur'd o'er.
Not, where the woods with strains of gladness ring;
Not, where earth, air and heaven unfold their store
Of bliss, to mock his grasp, illusive, evermore.



XIV.

Yet, 'tis not link of steel, that forms the slave :
Such *have* enclasp'd the freest of the free.
'Tis not in straiten'd walls :—for then, the Grave,
That Hall of Freedom, would no longer be
His refuge calm, whose charter'd liberty
Truth has redeem'd, undaunted Manhood bought.
Self weaves the chain of subtlest slavery ;
And grov'ling souls, and they, whose soaring thought
Spurns the dull lure of Sense, have worn those gyves,
self-wrought.

CANTO IV.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.



'Twas early morn, when Vernon's active stride
Climb'd the steep mount, or swept its shadowy side :
While, with keen eye, he scann'd the glowing scene,
And drank its sweetness, all, and glory, in :
Scarce witting, half the fascination stole
Its might, from spell, deep-seated in the soul :
That, 'mid the tissue of existence, wove
One golden thread : the fairy twine of Love.

Love, the heart's dread hierophant ; who shows
The soul, her powers, her weaknesses and woes :

Her aptitude for bliss (remote how far !)
How still conjunct, her good and evil star.
Who comes, but once. Who lingers, but awhile :
Creation hallowing with his angel smile ;
And, dying all too soon, a beauteous ray
Streams back, from realms, not subject to decay,
Thro' Memory's hallow'd aisles ;—and gilds the past,
With glory, sad, sweet, witching, to the last.

As hope or fear, alternate sway'd his breast,
By turns he sped ; by turns his step repress'd.
While, still advancing, round him rise and glow
Gleams of past joy and shades of soften'd woe.
The Orient Sun had rear'd his disk of gold,
Above the mountains of perennial snow.
Each distant peak, each nearer mount was stol'd
In robes of vapour light, of graceful flow.
Not yet the bulbul had forgot his note ;
Nor dumb the cuckoo's memory-stirring lay :
The blackbird swell'd his little, honied throat :
The very rocks seem'd conscious of the Day :

Their mossy knolls assum'd a livelier green :

 Their weather-beaten features kindled high :

And ev'ry dew-drop, on their wild-flowers seen,

 Wore the bright sparkle of affection's eye.

But, e'en the blackbird's note, the bulbul's lay ;

Those tears, so precious, of the new-born day ;

Yon Orient Orb ; that gentle burst of bliss,

Which hails him, rising from the dark abyss

Of perish'd years ; where he shall, one day, burn

His glory out, no more to know return :—

All, all is now a void, absorpt and drown'd

In notes, that have the penetralia found

Of his rapt soul ; and wafted it along,

In all the wild, triumphant power of song,

To th' Elysium of the lover's breast ;

Joys past, not perish'd : still, but not at rest.

Ask ye, what notes could thus his spirit move ?

Reader, thou know'st not, yet, the power of Love.

SONG.

1.

'The Bird hath ta'en her Summer mate :

 Away she flies—away she flies ;

On blissful wing, with heart elate.
 Love never dies. Love never dies.

2.

'The Falcon mark'd that blissful flight,
 With greedy eye, with greedy eye.
 He struck the Chosen, in her sight :
 Love cannot die. Love cannot die.

3.

'She nurs'd, upon the greenwood spray,
 Love's venom'd dart, love's venom'd dart.
 The Deathless took his fluttering prey,
 And still'd her heart, and still'd her heart.'

The notes had ceas'd : yet, still the Songstress' eye,
 Absorpt in thought, was fix'd on vacancy :
 And still the list'ner rested on that tone,
 Which tranc'd his spirit, tho' the lay was done.
 The while reclin'd She, 'neath a cedar' shade ;
 Festoon'd around, with many a fairy braid
 Of wild, red roses. Roses that do bind
 Their wreathen forms, fantastically twin'd, }
 Beneath the influence of no Earthborn wind :
 But on the waft of Heaven their odours pour ;
 To feast immortal guests, each in his amaranth bower.

Thus Constance sat. The Queen of Flowers ne'er
smiled,

More beauteous, o'er th' enamell'd Phocian wild.

The young Aurora ; when her beauty's light
Pierc'd the dense film, that cloak'd Orion's sight ;
Thrill'd not the soul, with more intense delight. }

For, he who gaz'd on that young, budding form,
Throbbing with grace, with sweet affections warm ;
Found a new nature, dawning in his breast,
Ennobling thoughts, and aspirations blest :
As, on Parnassus' brow, some Bard, who hears,
'Mid the night hush, the music of the spheres.

And, when those spirit eyes met ours, and shone,
In all their lustrous beauty, on our own :
And from those lips, in modulation low,
Words, that were music's very soul, 'gan flow :
To gem-sown haunts of Peri and of Fay,
The mute, transc'd soul was wafted, far away.
For each bright thought, in simplest language moulded,
(Unconscious dropt from lips, that pearls infolded)


Breath'd of its beauteous source : till rubies rare,
And Orient pearls seem'd shower'd, in clusters, there :
While on the cheek's clear mirror glass'd, we trace
In hues, aye varying, harmonis'd by grace,
Youth's sweet emotions, as they steal or dart,
With the warm life blood, from her gentle heart.

On that dark eye, you might not gaze, to scan
Its form, its hue, its brilliance : for, there ran
From 'neath the ebon fringe, a fount of light,
Whose glory dazzled and bewilder'd sight :
Whose gushing radiance, to the heart address
Chas'd each dun care and discord from the breast :
And lighted up, 'mid Memory's hallow'd store,
Forgotten treasures, lov'd and priz'd of yore :
Till, in the host of sweet emotions drown'd,
Sight lost the vision, Soul and Memory found.
Ask ye, indeed, its tint ? That, few might say ;
So chang'd it, still, in Fancy's changeful play.
Whate'er the feeling touch'd, the thought exprest.
Her eye the hue assum'd, that match'd it best.

Like some rich brilliant, flashing, not with one
Fixt dye: but sevenfold glory of the sun.

And, when she smil'd in gayety, there hung
A young bird, o'er our bosom:—one, that sung
The morning carol of reviving joy;
That made it life's most rational employ,
Only to gaze and listen, and be blest.
And when, perchance, some sadness, unconfest,
Touch'd that young spirit, innocent and gay
As fawn, that pastures 'mid the flowers of May;
A new, sweet charm, call'd forth that pensive mood,
O'er which 'twas luxury, for the heart, to brood.
As, gazing down some Autumn-mellow'd dell,
We list the far notes of the Vesper bell:
While, steal upon the soul, with each charm'd tone,
Young, sad, sweet memories of a day bygone.

The songstress ceas'd. And, rising to depart,
Met Vernon's gaze, with quick and joyful start.
Oh! triumph, proudest, wealth nor power may buy,
The flush of joy, when one lov'd step draws nigh:




The glance, all-sparkling, as the Morn-star's own ;
When dews *but* brighten beams, they fain would drown.

‘Constance,’ he said ; as, bounding to her side,
He touch’d the hand, she gave not, nor denied :
While, for one brief, one Heav’n-stol’n moment, all
Her cares, in sweet oblivion, seem’d to fall.
‘Constance.’ ’Twas all he utter’d : and the word
On ear less fond, had died, perchance, unheard.
But, to her spirit’s inmost fane it wound
Its spell, and ready, answering echo found.
Scarce heard, yet felt, throughout the quivering frame
Of the mute soul, it tremulously came :
Like deep-toned Organ’s shadow-wave⁴² of sound,
Voiceless ; but felt, above, within, around.
It told her she was lov’d ; thro’ symbols, known,
But to the lov’d and loving heart alone.
It call’d a tear ; the purest, ever wrung
From strife, most sweet, of feelings, all o’erstrung :
When, sudden bliss, with too transcendent art,
Sweeps o’er those high-wound tendons of the heart :

So long attun'd to sorrow ; that their tone,
As yet, can render tears and sighs, alone.

Ye, who, perchance, in youth and freedom gay,
List the lone breathings of an exile's lay:
Know ye? Ah! no, such lore is for the mind,
Whose mine of joy lies, buried, far behind,
In the dim haze of years. Ye cannot know
The melancholy bliss, the soothing woe ;
Wherewith such moments, summon'd from the night
Of the sad past, revive, before his sight.
How lights his eye, how fires his brain, once more ;
How thrills his pulse ; which cannot, as before,
Shoot its glad tide, its genial flood, along,
Nor kindle freely, to the voice of song.
Oh! were my spirit, as in days of yore,
My heart attun'd to freedom, as before,
Ere desolation reign'd :—I yet might dare
The lay of love, once all too welcome, there :
That lay, which sweet to youthful Beauty's ear,
She loves to list ; yet blushes, aye, to hear.



But in my hand, some fatal bias, still
Mars each weak effort of my wavering will :
And the soft love-notes, ere they find a tongue,
Are chang'd to wailing and the funeral song.

‘Vernon,’ she said, ‘thou com’st, at need, to cheer
A heart, oppress’d with vague and shapeless fear ;
Such, as oft harbingers impending woe.—
But, thou, too, wear’st a shadow, on thy brow.’

‘Oh ! speak not, now, of woe. Let that sad word,
In thy sweet presence die, unbreath’d, unheard.
Is’t not enough, when from thee I am gone,
To list its deep knell, tolling, sadly, on,
Thro’ the heart’s lifeless aisles ? Joy, joy should be
Thy lot : since joy is ever found with thee.’

‘And whither hast thou rov’d ? What scenes survey’d,
Since from the mountain side thy footstep stray’d ?’

‘Not from the mountain, hath my footstep rov’d :
The mountain, still, in all its aspects lov’d.

I long'd to stand, companionless and lone,
On bleak Himāla's Earth-disjected throne :
'Mid the bright stars, to hold my vigil high,
And share, with them, the watchtower of the sky.'

'Hast thou, indeed, those glorious realms explor'd ?
What greeting gave the Mountains' sov'reign lord ?
What didst thou see, feel, hear, on that bleak height,
Divorc'd from Nature, by the ban of Might ?'

'Time will not serve me, to recount thee, now,
The utter speechlessness of awe ; the glow
Of wild delight, that, mingling in its flood,
Oppress'd my heart to bursting ; when I stood,
Where step of mortal ne'er had trod, till then :
When, stretch'd (far strown, far gleaming, 'neath my ken,
Remov'd to distance measureless) the grey,
Dim mists, in whose confus'd extension, lay
A world, with all its cares, its hopes and fears ;
Fair in its smiles ; fair in its very tears ;
Fair in its promise ; fair and beauteous, still,
E'en when the current of man's heart runs chill ;

E'en when the mirror of his soul, no more,
Gives back the glad reflection, as before :
But dimm'd with sadness, clouds each winning smile,
She yields, to charm, to soothe him or beguile,
With the black mists, that shroud his bosom' throne,
And renders back deformity, alone.'

' Oh ! tell me all you felt. I thirst to hear
Of those dread realms of solitude and fear ;
Where life is *not* ; and Silence holds domain ;
And Death binds all things, with his icy chain.'

' My foot was planted 'mid th' eternal snow
Of Desolation. The hoar, wither'd brow
Of Time, (who hath outliv'd himself and given
His woes to Earth, his diadem to Heaven)
Crouch'd, huge, beneath me. Wide, around me pil'd,
In the sun's last, expiring glory, smil'd
The realms of Silence ; the waste, frozen main
Of lifeless, voiceless Apathy ; whose chain
Girds half the Globe ; whose towering billows bear
The foam-wreaths (pil'd in hoary volumes, there)

Of each wild shock of elemental war,
Of each successive age : since first the star,
(That fierce, red star, Aldebaran) rose high ;
And the gigantic huntsman of the sky⁴³
Join'd the hoarse tumult, with a hunter's glee,
Unleash'd and let the howling Whirlwinds free.

'Twilight was settling on the World : but day
Dwelt, blushful, lovely, there ; where every ray,
With glory flush'd, glow'd, heighten'd in degree ;
And where the sun, still lingering, lov'd to see
His splendour mellowing to the spinel's hue.
But, as the distant world obscurer grew,
Those rosy tints, in most prolong'd decay,
Like some sweet dream, pass'd lingeringly, away ;
And Death's cold shade 'gan, stealthily upcreep,
From out th' abysm, measureless and deep :
Till peak and cliff and table-summit shone
In the chill garb of wintry age, alone.'

'Thou did'st not tarry there, the livelong night ;
'Mid all the terrors of that snowclad height ?'



‘Yes, still I linger’d; fetter’d by a spell,
I strove not to resist; while darker fell
The deep’ning gloom: and, round me, one by one
Troop’d forth the golden stars; and sweetly shone
Their friendly greeting: with, nor mist, nor cloud,
To hide their number, or their radiance shroud.
So lightly floating in the liquid air,
So pure, so lucid, so serenely fair:
Celestial spirits all; to whom do rise
Man’s aspirations pure and deathless sympathies.’

‘Nay! pause not, Vernon. Much I thirst to know
Th’ emotions felt, ’mid those bleak realms of snow.
How oft, t’ explore their vasty peaks, I’ve sigh’d:
Half-envying powers, to this frail frame denied.
Break not the chain of Fancy. Musings high
I read, in thy flush’d brow, and kindling eye.’

‘I stood, the atom of an atom, o’er
An Ocean of existence: whose dim shore
Is lost in distance measureless: whose chain
Of Being rises, where that mighty Main

Hides its dark mysteries ; link on link extending,
In series, aye progressing ; never ending.
And this vast Ocean, so profound, so wide ;
Whose very spray is peopled ; whose dense tide,
For ever wid'ning, swelling, deep'ning, knows
Nor pause, nor termination : nor o'erflows
By added cycles of existence ; nor
Shrinks in its depth, nor dwindles from its shore
By failing worlds of life. This mighty sea,
Itself a spray-drop, mid th' immensity
Of Heav'n's unplumb'd abyss : whose sands of light,
Alone, hang palpable to mortal' sight.

‘ I felt mine eye dilating : the warm blood
Grow still and stagnate : as this mighty flood
Rush'd round me ; dazzling, welming, in that hour
Of conscious insignificance, each power,
I erst had boasted :—and a mortal chill
Was busy at my heart ; a palsyng thrill
Of bleak despair : as though, already, there
The loathly worm reign'd, conqueror, in his lair.

And, "Ah!" I cried, (and ev'ry word seem'd wrung
From the last agony of soul,) "whence sprung
This mystery of being? What is man,
Thou dread Eternal, that the insect span
Of his existence, should demand of thee
A passing thought: or that his son should be
An object of thy care?"

My shuddering mind
Reel'd to its centre: and my sight grew blind
In th' intensity of awe.—And low
I bow'd my forehead:—till the wintry snow
Of that bleak height grew ice, beneath the chill
Of my numb'd brow, more cold, more icy still.


' Morn's earliest flush illum'd my downward tread,
O'er treacherous snows, of that vast Peak of Dread.
Now with the sliding avalanche launch'd; and now
Toiling waist-deep, 'mid seas of feathery snow.
Far spent the day, when worn with toil I stood,
Where, from a glacier, gush'd the cold, green flood:
That, strong and deep, laps'd by in sullen bliss;
Then, headlong plunging, sought the void abyss,

Uncounted fathoms down : where, but as spray,
It, shatter'd, wins an air-impeded way.
Full on the verge, a rude, old temple stands ;
Of cedar built, the work of rustic hands.
Such eyry rude, the fabled Roc might strow
On Kāff's " age-rifted, spirit-haunted brow.
Wrapt in my cloak, within the cell I crept ;
And, worn with toil and watching, deeply slept.
How long I know not. When I woke, 'twas night :
Yet, thro' the gloom, broke flickering gleams of light :
And round the genial flame, in conference, rose
Voices, whose chime had, doubtless, chas'd repose.
So grave the import. Thence by night, by day
Scarce resting, I've retrac'd the weary way,
Our Ruler's ear t' attain.'

‘Deem I aright ?

The revelation of that anxious night
Our Sipahi ranks concern'd : the treason grown
In hearts once wholly, loyally our own ? ’

‘Thou know'st it, then ! And I the pain am spar'd
Of sad disclosure : needful else, to guard
Thy heedless step ? ’



‘Strange rumours are afloat.

The Native ear drinks, deep, the raven note.
Our menials drop dark hints of our disgrace ;
Our speedy fall ; the triumph of their Race.
All hath, for weeks, seem’d dimly to foreshow
Some vast convulsion, fraught with death and woe,
In mystery veil’d.’

‘A crisis is at hand,

May well our Ruler’s promptest skill demand.
The Army’s discipline consign’d to rust,
Thro’ faithless acts, suggestive of distrust :
Has left them, tools for all, whose rights, of late,
Have been, or may, full soon, be confiscate,
By lore, unrighteous, to our sires unknown,
Whose faith unblemish’d, made these realms, our own.
The wrong once wrought, no power can now recall ;
Nor stay the retribution, sure to fall,
Not on the actors, but th’ unconscious Band,
Wife, mother, infant, scatter’d o’er the land.’

‘And who the leader of a plot so dire ?

Who kindled, first ? Who fan the hidden fire ?’

‘Immers’d in mystery’s murk, unfathom’d tide,
The crafty authors of sedition hide.
Wary the death-blow of the Lion’s paw,
Yet safe in impotence of British law ;
Their trust, to win, nought staking of their own,
Nor blood, nor lands, nor liberty, nor throne.
The treasure, lavish’d on their vast emprise,
The purse of prince, already fall’n, supplies ;
Through hands, unmatch’d in treason’s tortuous
game,
Whose plots have shaken, twice, our empire’s frame :
Who, out of sight, and silent as the breath
Of pestilence, nor less the tool of Death,
Securely sheds her dire contagion round,
Most deadly still, in hush the most profound.
Her Staff of agents, unknown Treasurers pay.—
If seiz’d those agents, powerless to betray.
Mask’d, as gosyne,⁴⁵ or jogy or fuqueer,
All yield *them* credence full, whom all revere.
While on this privileg’d class, constraint but
draws
Eclat, as champions of the nation’s cause.’

‘ Surely a plot, by many traitors plann’d,
Without one master mind, one guiding hand,
Must, on its author’s heads recoil, with might,
Strength’ning the hands of Order and of Right.’

‘ Thou mind’st me, Constance, I have left unsaid,
The strangest fact, of this strange tale of dread :
Legion their name, by whom the plot is plann’d :
But grasps the whole, one vigorous, master hand,
In mystery shrouded. E’en the adverse host
Know, nor his name, nor birth : but fondly boast,
No mortal guidance⁴⁶ marshals them along.
And thus, while wonder awes the vulgar throng,
And reckless confidence their courage fires :
This leader feeds the awe, his fame inspires,
By many a subtil wile. And (strange to say) }
He walks, unchalleng’d his mysterious way, }
Here, thro’ the land, he counts his certain prey. }
Once, on yon “peak of Terror,” when the sky
Rush’d down, fire, flood and thunder, from on high ;
Vision’d before me, for an instant, there ;
Borne it might seem, (as lighted) by the glare ;

A form, majestic, one brief moment stood.—
Or whether, mortal thing of flesh and blood ;
Or strong illusion of the dazzled sight,
I could not judge : for, swift-succeeding night }
Hail, wind and tempest blotted all from sight, }
But, not from memory : where, despite my will,
With strange surmise, it dogs and haunts me still.
A form of might. A brow of stern command.
An eagle glance, (belied of smile, most bland) ;
For guilt too high : too keen for worth to wield :
Claiming the trust, we would, but dare not yield.
A countenance, where glass'd in mystery, dwell
Earth's brightest lights, and proudest shades of Hell.
Where Pow'rs, array'd without a banner, throng ;
Champions of Right or slavish tools of Wrong.
Ready, their aid in Justice' cause to lend :
Or, like the pestilence, to foe and friend,
Fatal, alike, to sweep resistless, o'er
Earth's ravag'd breast, in plenitude of power,
Cursing and curst.'

‘Most strange ! it seems to start
That portrait, from my own, deep-boding heart.



Shap'd from vague fears ; surmises full of woe,
Of One——'

 ' Of whom ?—It much imports to know
Who thus can scare thee ? '

 ' Nay ! the sentence broke
At random from my lips. I rashly spoke.
Ingrate, unjust, irrational and blind ;
My words were vainer, than the idle wind.
A terror, meteorlike, glar'd o'er my brain ;
Fantastic, hideous, mischievous and vain.'

 ' I cannot guess thy meaning. Dare not stay :
So vast the stake, imperill'd by delay.'

 ' Hold, Vernon. Thou'st describ'd a Man of Fear.
Cross not his path, should he, once more appear.
The tiger', panther', lion's lair invade ;
And freely dare the Upas' deadly shade :
But shun this man.'

 ' Hah ! holdest thou so light,
Constance, this arm, when striking for the Right ?

Shall one vain man, his haughty challenge hurl'd,
Unanswer'd ride the proud lists of the World?
No! by my Father's fame.'

 ' Ah ! not for thee,
Alone, my fears. Strange gloom o'ershadows me :
Thro' which, that Form of Dread, in giant might,
'Mid blood and woe, uprises on my sight.'

 ' Oh ! calm thy Fears. From ill to shield thy head,
Angels of Light their wings benign shall spread.
Peril to gauge, gives confidence for guide.
Forewarn'd, forearm'd, with justice on our side,
Trust me, Heaven's flood of azure and of light
Shall whelm those blood red clouds, that daunt thy sight.
But see, thy sire, from yonder wood-crown'd brow,
Looks down. These tidings he must, instant, know.
A boon I crave. One flower, of all that wait,
Thrice honour'd vassals of thy Fairy State.'

 She pluck'd the flower, with blushful cheek, and eye
Suffus'd in tears : one deep, unutter'd sigh.
Trembling, *she* proffer'd, and *he* snatch'd the prize.
Their grasp it baffles : at her feet it lies.

And, bending both, the mischief to repair,
The wilding brier her beauteous head laid bare ;
And her rich tresses, in unfetter'd flow,
Stream'd o'er his shoulders and around his brow ;
A silken treillage, meet to cage him in
With her, Life's one, glad, golden Ray, for him.
Hallow'd, as dreams of childhood's guileless day,
The soft, sweet weight of those dark ringlets lay :
Not scatter'd, seem'd it, by the matchless art
Of Nature, o'er his brow ; but, on his heart
Reposing each, and pillow'd ; where his best
And holiest thoughts, were ever wont, to rest.

And she. A moment wilder'd : rich o'erspread
With innocent shame, and bashful, maiden dread ;
Smil'd as she blush'd, and blush'd for ev'ry smile ;
And backward shrunk and brighter glow'd, the while.
Till the red roses, that around her grew,
Wax'd pale and charmless, in that lovelier hue :
As they had yielded all Aurora's dower
Of vermeil bloom, t' enrich that matchless flower.

For, with the tear, still trembling in her eye,
Smile follow'd blush, and blush replied to sigh.
And thus they parted. He, in hope's full glow :
She, with sad heart, where sweetness temper'd woe.

She sank in pensive mood, beside the stream ;
Where each pure dewdrop, on the living green
Of moss and fern, transmuted to a gem,
Worthy to grace the emerald diadem
Of the queen Fairy. Here, a mimic lake,
Receding from their course, the waters make.
An Ocean circumscrib'd : where, infant Love
Might launch and freight his tiny bark, to prove
What force the gale of his young wing can boast,
To waft the frigate, to its destin'd coast.
So calm, so still, beneath the level ray
Of the young Morn, that liquid crystal lay ;
That, save, when fluttering downward to its breast,
Some rose-leaf ruffled its enchanted rest :
And, to the base of yon fair cliff, would steal
A delicate tremor, transient and unreal,

Met by its own, sweet shadow,⁴⁷ coursing down ;
You might have deem'd, that bank, those waters one ;
Nor mark'd the slightest, silvery thread of light,
Where rock and wave harmoniously unite.

O'er this fair lake, an ocean-realm to her,
On wings that light a sunbow thro' the air,
From flow'r to flow'r, a beauteous insect flies :
Or stoops, where glass'd, more tempting to her eyes,
Their forms, inverted blossom : till her wing
Breaks the still surface, into many a ring ;
That dimpling, spreading, wid'ning, more and more,
Rolls a bright billow, tow'rd the rock-bound shore.

Still, o'er the fairy lake, that beauteous Thing
Wanders, from sweet to sweet, with restless wing.
Still her bright image, in the flood beneath,
Faithful as echo to the woodlark's breath,
Holds her fair company : and, still, the eye
And heart of Constance follow, musingly :
Until, unconsciously, the peaceful rest
Of those calm waters crept into her breast :

And with their soft reflection, few and lone,
Some dim, faint visions stole, of joy to come.

Her young heart's image, in its sunniest day,
Wing'd and adorn'd, seem'd once again, to play
In the gay, living Thing, which wander'd there,
'Mid scenes as blest; beneath a sky, as fair.
Again the echo of her heart seem'd caught,
And mimick'd gaily, thought responding thought,
And all of gladness; from the rock, the glade,
The stream that laughs in sunshine, as in shade.
Oh! yet there seem'd for her, as for the wing
And bosom gay of that ethereal Thing,
Hope, e'en on Earth; a yet unclouded morn;
And freshness, folded in the hour unborn.
Till, as that flutterer stoop'd, where glass'd they lie
Flow'rs, that still baffling, tempt the wing and eye:
Sudden, the placid wave, dividing, gave
To her, a foe at once, and living grave:
Dimpled awhile in waves, from shore to shore;
Then, coldly settled, smiling as before.

Constance arose. Her spirit was oppress :
The sigh, that swell'd, died, stifled, in her breast.
She, shuddering, turn'd her, from the fair, false Deep ;
Smiling, like Infancy's own cherub sleep ;
Then, pensive sought the homeward path, so lone.
And, like the lingering echo, of a tone,
To Nature dear ; 'mid those vast columns grey
Of Nature's temple, mingling, pass'd away.

END OF CANTO IV.

CANTO V.

THE PASS OF PERIL

I



CANTO V.

THE PASS OF PERIL.



I.

THE clouds lie, gather'd in the gulf beneath,
Pale, phantom lakes, begirt with shores of gloom ;
Where ghosts, who've felt the stern divorce of Death,
Unshrouded, wander, nightly, from the tomb ;
And, shrieking, mourn their chill and joyless doom.
Night wanes. Yet, 'neath yon snow-ridge buried far,
Aurora hides her young and budding bloom :
While Cynthia steers thro' Heav'n, her pearly car,
Hand, lock'd in hand, with thine, effulgent Orient Star.

II.

But see! Insensibly, yon' giant peak
Hath caught the Spinel's tenderest, roseate hue;
And still another, and another cheek
Is flush'd, Aurora's budding charms in view:
Till, o'er that Death-cold waste, Love's fires renew
Life, hope and bliss: And, like a garland rare,⁴⁸
Which, o'er the cheerless grave, Faith's fingers strew,
That rosy chain hangs, isolate, in air;
Assurance sweet of Life, 'gainst Death and black Despair.

III.

'Constance, awake! Sweet slumb'r'er break the spell,
Which, o'er thine eye, weighs down its folden snow.
The shadowy realms, thy vision paints so well,
Are not more glorious, than around thee glow,
In Morn's young, budding freshness. Can they show
Planets, so pure? a breeze, so full of bliss?
Sweet be youth's dreams. But ah! how swiftly flow
Their meted sands. And, o'er Life's murk abyss,
How soon we wake, to weep their fleeting blessedness.

IV.

‘Constance, awake! Wake, lov’d One; for the morn
Is rife of portents; and the lapsing hour
Mid omens, sinister, to thee, is born,
Who slumb’rest, all unconscious, in thy bower,
That baleful planets, from their orbits pour.—
Rise, lov’d One, fearless of their spite malign:
Thine own sweet constellation’s sevenfold⁴⁹ power
Tempers their noxious rays, with light benign,
And hov’ring Angels o’er thee spread, the shield of Love
Divine.

V.

‘Awake! an Eden waits thee. ’Tis the last
Fond look, perchance, thou ’lt give to scene, so rare
The sun will smile, when thou from hence art past;
The mount, the vale bloom, all, as fresh and fair,
And, gaily still, from forest, field and air,
The birds, thou lov’st, their carol blithe prolong,
The flowers their scents exhale, without thy care;
The glancing brook still chant its careless song,
Vanish’d thy grace alone, and mute thy thrilling tongue.’


Such were or seem'd the sounds, whose fall and swell
Stole o'er her slumber, with entrancing spell,
Half sweet, half fearful ; rending, in their close,
The filmy trammels of her light repose.

Constance arose, with shapeless dread opprest :
She felt Care's thrall, the need of Heavenly rest :
And, as some young Dove, startled from the spray,
Upsoars on wings of freedom, far away,
Into her own calm Heav'n ; she rais'd on high
The glowing heart, the meek, confiding eye ;
Shook from her soul, the dews of Care's dank mine
To bask, all-trustful, in a ray Divine.

So, the young crescent Moon's frail, beauteous form
Threat the black gloom-clouds of the mustering storm
To blot from Heav'n : yet sweeping, wrathful, o'er
Serener leave, more beauteous than before ;
Nestling in Heav'n's embrace ; where clouds nor rest
Nor care upclimbs, from Earth's woe-tarnish'd breast.

Down in the hall, the Father met his child ;
Bless'd, as she hung around his neck and smil'd.
Oh ! not for titles, power or high renown,
Would her fond Sire that mute caress disown.
But hark the tramp of steeds. They mount ; they go.
The pale moon greets them, with her fairy brow.
A score of Horse, by Vernon's thoughtful care,
Pick'd men ; a welcome escort, wait them there.
And now, adown the gently swelling height,
Her palfrey fleet bounds, tameless with delight,
To snuff the balmy freshness of the air,
Known, in its bliss unsullied, only there ;
And feel her fairy form, enkindling high
Life in his blood, and glory in his eye.

They move in silence. Well becomes the still,
Deep pause of silence, that majestic hill ;
With all its thousand forests, glooming deep,
O'er its long crest and down its headlong steep.
Forests of fragrance, liquid amber shedding :
Pines of gigantic growth, their huge limbs spreading :




While, on the gale of night, their tresses fall ;
And blends their murmur, with the streamlet's brawl.
Cedars most stately. Mossy oaks, scarr'd o'er
With thrice a hundred years of elemental war.

These all were dear ; had greeted her, when gay ;
And shar'd her musings many a blissful day :
From where Himāla, like a Titan^gghost,
Around him musters his gigantic host :
Back to the brook, that sparkling bounds along,
Lulling the night-gale, with its siren song.

‘ Oh ! ere, for ever, from mine eye they fade,
Thy gleams of glory, thy deep floods of shade ;
Thy paths of mystery, leading ever on
The captive step ; thy forest glades so lone ;
Where only holiest sounds of bliss intrude,
To perfect Nature's breathing solitude :
One long, fond glance of love, or ere we part,
Those glowing charms shall garner in my heart :
Where, deep emotions, surging, struggling swell,
To waft the accents of my last farewell.

‘ Farewell, farewell, friends of my lonely hour ;
Visions, still prompting to the high emprise ;
Kindling, to flame, the spirit’s hidden power ;
The thirst intense for love, that never dies.
Blame not the weakness, springing to mine eyes.
Joy’s reign is transient ; deep the power of Woe.
An hour shall bleach, of their prismatic dyes,
Yon’ haughty crests of everlasting snow :
Whose granite, tears have grav’d, in their unceasing
flow.

‘ Farewell, ye mountains of the sunny East,
Unmatch’d, unmatchable, in giant might.
Shoot, still, those pinnacles, in snow-wreaths drest,
And swath’d in tints of iridescent light.
Soon must ye fade, for ever, from my sight ;
And colder eyes your beauties shall explore ;
And colder bosoms feign the fresh delight,
They never felt : and hollow words shall pour
Chill praise, where tongues of fire, their faltering might
deplore.




‘Farewell ! ye forests of inviolate shade.
Farewell ! ye channels to the mountain’ tears.
Farewell ! ye chasms, by the Earthquake made ;
Bold reminiscences of other years.
Ye have been round me, in my hopes, my fears,
My joys and sorrows. Ye have witness’d, still,
My high and lonely musing : when Earth’s cares
Were lost, in Fancy’s all-absorbing thrill,
And, lone, my spirit walk’d, o’er each majestic hill.

‘Farewell ! ye rills, that leap, impetuous, down,
And mingle with the winds your feathery spray.
Farewell ! ye gales, that waft the fresh perfume,
From banks with Flora’s festal bounties gay.
Farewell ! farewell ! If ever Hope betray ;
’Twill be with smile, like yours, from memory won.
If e’er again, one transitory ray
Revive the wild delight of days bygone ;
Ye, in your charms, shall rise, around me, one by one.’⁵⁰

The livelong day, those trav’lers wended on ;
The course pursuing of the Westering sun :

Skirting green summits, naked, bleak and bare ;
(Whose charm their lonely spell, and crystal air)
Winding in curvatures of giant span.
A region wild, whose only trace of Man,
The beaten track, perchance, or cottage white ;
A small, dim speck, scarce beaming on the sight ;
From brook-lav'd, lands, sunk, fathomless, below,
Engulf'd, where tides imblent of shade and azure flow.

The sun hangs, pausing, o'er yon' mountain chain,
Whose ridge, impurpled, hides the subject plain :
Undimm'd as yet, his bright, far-darting eye.
Yet, ere Night's pall envelope Earth and sky ;
The giant strife of elemental war
Shall rise, fair Nature's blest repose to mar ;
And, like the brawls of sceptred atoms, drown
The peace of millions, in th' unrest of one.
For mark yon' mount, whose double summits mass
In one lone peak, as onward still we pass.
'Twas lost in distance, drown'd in light, erewhile :
And now, upheaves its rock-compacted pile,




Into the sky above us. The swart glow
Of lurid light, suffusing that stern brow,
Fades into gloom, around the summit lone,
And wildering skirts, with forest dense o'ergrown ;
And, girt with sunshine, lours the reign of Night :
And chasm dark and precipice unite,
To hoard the shadow, as its deep tide falls
Down those lone rifts and o'er their wizard walls.

The mountain deer is gazing wildly round :
He knows each sign, each mystery-burthen'd sound ;
Each stilly pause, each brief and fitful sigh,
That speaks the Spirit of the Mountain, nigh.
Dilates his eye. 'Tis revelry to him
The strife of elements. Each agile limb
Is strung with fire and energy, that warm
The delicate outline of his spritelike form.
To course with rocks, that flee the thunder's might ;
And bound, with them, straight down the headlong
height :
And emulate their fleetness, as they go
From ledge to ledge, from crag to crag below :

While rushing tempests battle with his crest ;
And flood and wind break, harmless, on his breast ;
And rock and shrub before him vainly rise,
To test the viewless wings, on which he flies.
And then, to seek his own serene retreat ;
Where arching rocks and wreathen branches meet :
And taste the luxury, earn'd 'mid toil and strife ;
And calm repose, while all around is rife
With angry discord : such is joy to him :
And such, foreshows him many a portent dim :
As, drinks his eye the slowly-shifting scene,
And his wide nostril snuffs the freshness in.

'Twas, as in lengthen'd files careering past,
Beneath a summit, isolate and vast :
Sudden, the hoofsounds of a steed arrest
Each ear, and wake surmise, in ev'ry breast.
All paus'd, all gaz'd, all, wond'ring, strain'd the eye,
In doubt, in marvel, or perplexity,
Up that lone height : as, down its steepy side,
A single horseman lightly seem'd to ride ;



Where mortal, surely, never rode before.
A warrior horseman, who, the turban wore,
And purple tunic rich, with sable lin'd ;
And grasp'd the slim lance, quivering to the wind.

Black was his steed, as night, without a star :
High arch'd the crest, the wild mane floated far.
The blood-red nostril wide-inflated stood,
And spouted, high to Heav'n, a vaporous flood,
As prideful bounding down the mount he sped,
With form back-pois'd, and ample chest outspread,
And hoofs, that pawing in the sky, require
No rest, more stable, for their nerves of fire ;
And eye, that wand'ring wildly o'er the scene,
Searches out peril and drinks rapture in.—
A child, a freeborn, tameless native, he
Of the waste sands, of pathless Araby :
His joy, to company the Whirlwind's flight :
No step intruding on their lone delight.
Calm, as reposing on a throne of state,
One with his steed, the youthful rider sate :

The inspiration of that matchless horse ;
Whose viewless influence prompts each bound, and sways
his glorious course.

'Tis he ! 'Tis Vernon. By the matchless grace ;
That easeful skill ; yon steed of noblest race ;
The open brow ; the fearless glance and free ;
By thy quick pulse, sweet Maid ; thy cheek's bright flush,
'tis he.'

Brief space ; ere pausing on that mountain road,
Still, as some statue, carv'd in marble, stood
That wond'rous steed : his passing toil, confest
In the faint heaving of his ample chest ;
In the white foam wreaths, glist'ning where they lay,
O'er the black velvet of his crest ; like spray,
Which Ocean scatters, in his playful might,
High, 'mid the gloom-clouds of December's night.

Apart, in conference with de Walden's son
Their welcome guest. His ~~last~~ tidings ~~recorded~~.

The storm, that long in threat'ning gloom had stood,
Bursting, at length, had delug'd Earth with blood.
And Meerut's night of horror soon might know
Eclipse, in blacker nights of crime and woe.
Meanwhile, alarm had thro' their station spread.
A stranger, late de Walden's guest, 'twas said,
Had levied privately, a lusty band
Of followers, arm'd with matchlock, spear and brand ;
And Westward march'd, by path obscure and lone ;
Which, midway, meets and mingles with their own.
The scale unwonted of a train, array'd
For peaceful sport : the weapons each display'd
The mystery deep, around that stranger hung,
Now, first, the theme of many a busy tongue,
Conspir'd, distrust to spread ; which ev'ry hour
With Rumour's lying aid, increas'd in power.
Till, urg'd by shapeless dread and anxious care,
Vernon had spurr'd, their farther steps to share.

Warmly de Walden blam'd the panic dread,
Had o'er the faultless, foul suspicion shed.

Rehears'd his daughter's rescue ; and express'd
His trust implicit in his recent guest.
But anxious thoughts in either heart found place,
And grav'd on either brow, their sadd'ning trace.

Past is the hamlet ; past the mouldering tower :
Bulwark, of yore, to man's tyrannic power :
And now, but preaching from its ruins grey,
The lesson, humbling, of Man's swift decay.
Fall'n is the banner ; torn the silken fold ;
Where glory, swath'd, as in a cloud, was roll'd
Of rainbow dyes : and moulder'd is the arm ;
And back restor'd to dust, the heart, once warm
With fires, that seem'd not form'd, like it, to die :
And the swift torrent brawling careless by,
Bore, for an instant, on its cold, dark breast,
The whit'ning dust, so eloquent of rest :
Then, onward dash'd in whirlpool, wave and spray ;
And Man's last link to Earth is, heedless, swept
away.

There *is* a silence, in the ambient air ;
 There is a blackness, in the vault on high :
The breeze, the mountain breeze, so free, so fair,
 No longer bursts, in joyous freedom, by.
 Aloft, the azure of the Ev'ning sky
Is deeper, softer, denser than before :
 As pure, but far more liquid in its dye ;
As though condens'd, its boundless, fluid store
Roll'd, a wide Ocean waste ; without or isle or shore.

'Tis at the foot of yon' cloud-garnish'd height ;
 'Twixt hanging cliffs, the Earthquake's sportive
 toil ;
The swift, dark torrent dashes in its might,
 With troubled waves, that like a caldron, boil,
 And, onward hurrying, sweep the rocky spoil
Of earlier worlds, in headlong haste, away ;
 And lift their voice, amid the wild turmoil ;
And toss on high their wreaths of cold, white spray,
O'er which, no sunbeam sheds, its hope-reviving
 ray.

Haste trav'lers, haste ! Ere to yon' flood beneath,
The Ocean dark, which threatens from on high,
Shall yield its waves. For, even now, a breath,
Sudden and brief, as Passion's furnace sigh,
Proclaim'd the gale, the flood, the tempest nigh ;
And mightier woes, from smaller seeds have sprung :
Haste ! Ere yon' torrent shall your course defy ;
Or sweep the rider and his steed along ;
O'er the rude, pointed rocks, like mangled drift-weed,
flung.

Long had de Walden view'd, with anxious eye,
Those louring portents, crowded in the sky ;
And thought, the while, how ill-prepar'd his child
To brave that tempest black, those billows wild.
Forth, at his signal, starts at freshen'd pace,
Each manag'd steed, exulting in the race :
Though herb, nor lichen springs, to break the shock,
Or soothe the hoof's harsh conflict, with the rock.

Dark is the torrent ; and its waves boil high :
As though, expecting succour from the sky,




It dar'd a tone of haughtier rage assume,
And borrow'd fury, from th' encroaching gloom.
And sharp the rocks, that 'neath the surface, sleep ;
The footing faithless, and the water deep.
Yet, breasting, there, the billow ;⁵¹ winding, slow,
Down the mid channel, and beneath the brow
Of cliff impending ; still the foremost Horse
Hold, thro' the raving tide, their devious course.
—And Constance follows, on her palfrey white :
But ill-protected, by his trivial height,
From the rough surge, that swathes his flanks, and raves,
Chaf'd into frenzied whirls, and crisply curling waves.
But that small palfrey picks his devious road,
Despite the sunken rocks and raving flood :
Nor can her peace, e'en peril' self impair ;
For Vernon tends her, with a lover's care.

Brief were those moments of the heart's repose.
For, at mid passage of the stream, there rose
A peal, so dire :—the very cliffs, around,
Seem'd crumbling to their base, with thund'rous sound,

Wide echoed thro' the glen ; and borne along,
Reverb'd and multiplied its caves among ;
Arresting Constance, with the soul's dismay.—
And, thro' the pass, and 'mid the rising spray
Of that dark torrent, masterless they dash
Back, from the van ; with many a frantic plash
And many a wavering bound ; the steeds, that late
Arch'd their proud necks beneath their masters' weight :
And now, as proud of freedom, breast the flood,
And leave those warriors, weltering in their blood.
Or, ruthless, drag the mangled forms, which press'd
Their backs ; and spurn, whom lately they caress'd.
Five battle-steeds, five warriors, tried and good,
That gorge had pierc'd and stemm'd its bounding
flood.


Four frantic chargers, in unbridled pride,
Plunge recreant back : and who, the fifth should guide,
Leans painfully, in listless languor drown'd :
Or wak'd to life, a moment, by the bound
Of his ungovern'd steed, glares, wildly, round, }
With eye, that yields no message to the brain :
Then, headlong lapses, ne'er to rise again.



One glance, an eagle glance, her warrior cast
Back, thro' the gorge, which, midway they had past ;
Rapid, as keen ; sufficing well to show
How vain retreat. For, there, the watchful foe,
Rang'd on the cliff, command the past extent
Of that rude gorge ; where helplessly is pent
Their small array. The onward path, alone,
Affords a hope ; a dread, a desperate one.
Close to the steeper cliff, he urges fast,
Thro' the vext torrent, madly whirling past,
That steed, whose freight, the gem most priz'd and blest,
Of all Earth's treasure, to his ardent breast ;
Waves high his hand ; and swift around him throng
His warrior band. And, when, those cliffs among
Aught living stirs ; still seeks to interfere
'Twixt her and Death, the life, priz'd but for her.
Unharm'd they pass. With woman wars not he,
Their hidden foe : whoe'er that foe may be.
They gain the farther marge : there reunite
Their scatter'd force, beneath a friendly height ;
While scouts dismiss, each path explore, around,
If, haply, exit from the snare, be found.

And now, condens'd to inky hue of night,
Lour'd the murk storm-rack, o'er that adverse height :
Where, swelt'ring, in the welkin's womb confin'd,
Seeth'd the dire thunder and the prison'd wind,
In maniac struggle.—And, as Constance' eye
Turn'd to that chaos of the wrathful sky ;
Her heart paus'd sudden, as in Death's chill blight :
For, full before her, cresting yon' bleak height,
Stood One, to her more fearful, than the frown
Of all Heav'n's tempests, rallying to rush down.

Behind, above, around him, densely roll'd,
In many a mighty swath, of giant fold,
Hung the black storm ; relieving with its dye
Of pitchy night, in outline, sharp and high,
Each pallid feature, which the passions fill
With pow'r, scarce master'd by the mightier will.
Calm ;—if *that* calmness be ; when chill Despair,
Spurn'd from the heart, bequeaths her venom there.
Calm ; if the festering of a thousand stings,
Hid in the wrinkle of a cold smile, brings




The sense of calmness. If yon' welkin rest,
Flood, fire and thunder madd'ning in its breast.
If *such* be calmness, mark that brow serene.
Gaze : for thou shalt not lightly meet again,
In the long pilgrimage of life, a brow,
Calm'd into such unutterable woe.
There, as beneath the brooding wing, he stood,
Of the dire Genius of that cloud-pent flood :
Seem'd it, the labouring Storm had brought him forth ;
And, for his need, reserv'd the thunders of her wrath.

Strange doubts, resisted ; yet not laid to rest,
Had Constance' mind distracted and oppress.
The truth, more terrible, confronts her there :
One, her deliv'rer and their foe,—St. Clair.

And who is he, that, tow'rd yon' deathful height,
Spurs his black steed, of all but wing'd might ?
'Tis Vernon. Faint his followers' hearts and few,
So dark the death, which threatens them, full in view.
He speeds, he flies. Those hoofsounds have awoke
The slumb'ring storm. E'en now its bosom spoke

In one, swift-rending sigh. And now, and now
The rocks fall, thund'ring, from the mountain' brow :
Its spirit is gone forth. And will that steed
Make good his footing, where the pine hath need
Of all its moorings ? Scale yon' dizzy mound,
Down which the earth-fast rocks, delirious, bound ?
Dismounted, Vernon speeds. He speeds alone.
His dastard Band have fail'd him, one by one.
And, sole partaker of his daring course,
Close in his track, pursues his matchless horse.

He nears the summit. 'Shield him, save him, now !'
She shrieks in mortal terror. For, the brow
Of that steep height is reeling to its fall :
And rock, with pine uprooted, seems to call
For more than mortal aid to him, who still
Toils, fleet and dauntless, up that deathful hill.
'It rocks, it falls. O Mercy ! it is past,
And vain my pray'r.' The mighty ruin, cast
From its primeval throne, rolls, smoking, down ;
And rocks uprooted, trees and shrubs o'erthrown,



Rain in a deluge down the steepy side ;
Leap the sheer bank and plunge amid the tide ;
Sending the agitated spray, on high,
O'er yon' bleak mount, and thro' the murky sky.

And where is Vernon ? Shuddering, o'er her brow
She press'd her hand. But, not a tear would flow,
To quench the fires, that parch her aching sight.
Tears soothe our pain and chasten our delight ;
But own no summons, to a woe, so drear.—
' Look up, sweet Maid. List well that shout of cheer !
He lives. By eye undazzled, snatch'd from death.
And list ! The tempest bates its furious breath ;
And tears down plunge, big, sullen, from the sky,
As his bold step scales higher, and more high.'

Brief cheer. Those shouts have call'd a hundred eyes
Upon the desperate scaler. Wildly rise,
From cliff to crag, from flood, to upper air,
The volleying echoes, thrice repeated there,
Of the dread matchlock. And, around his path
Rains, dense, the tempest of the foemen's wrath.

But, spite of all, he nears the vantage ground,
Where stands St. Clair, with warriors circled round :
Pauses ; his scatter'd band to reunite ;
(As yet, unconscious of their dastard flight)
Then, hopeless of their aid, beneath the brow
Of the steep height, glides, stealthy, on the foe :
And, ere an eye can twinkle ; ere a hand
Can point the matchlock, or pluck forth the brand ;
Springs, as a panther, from its lair, among
The densest cluster of the startled throng,
Whirls his keen blade, which never falls in vain ;
And hews, scarce harm'd, a pathway o'er the slain
Full on St. Clair.—Who stands, with brow of gloom,
Settled as Death and bodeful, as the Tomb,
And levell'd car'bine, master of his fate.—

'Twas, while her eye, in terror's pang dilate,
Grew on that fearful strife ; a flood of light,
The mount inwrapping, delug'd Constance' sight, }
With fire imprinting, on a scroll of night,
Each feature of the foes, in strife, who stood ;
Brothers, whose thirst can sate, *but* brother's blood.

And simultaneous, with the flash, there fell
A peal terrific, as the volumn'd knell
Of thunders, bellowing thro' the womb of Hell. }
Seem'd to her mind, daz'd, wilder'd and distraught
By one terrific, all-absorbing thought ;
That thund'rous peal, that flood of fiery glare,
Gush'd from the car'bine of the dire St. Clair.
And, when her eye, recovering from the shock,
In shuddering dread resought the fateful rock ;
Vernon, St. Clair, the mountain Band were gone.
High tower'd the ridge, dispeopled, bleak and lone ;
Back'd by the murky sky. One ragged cloud
Down-drooping o'er it, like a giant's shroud.

And now, a pause so still ; the very air
Appears to stagnate, in its silence, there.
And each can feel his life-blood toiling slow,
His heart-throbs loiter, and his life-sobs grow
Thick and constrain'd ; as palsied by th' arrest
Which fetters Heav'n. And 'mid that hush opprest,
With murmur of the rock-scarp'd torrent's flow,
Comes the dull boom, of burthen, rolling slow,

Or dropping heavily, from ledge to ledge :
A moment loitering on each crumbling edge,
By fringe of shrubs detain'd. Then, toppling o'er
Its brink, and falling, dully, as before.
Till, to the torrent's verge, adown the steep
It swifter whirls, and plunges in the deep,
With sullen plash ; as, yields the shuddering wave
That guest, unwelcome all, a watery grave.

Spellbound, her ear pursued that dire descent ;
Strain'd her scar'd eye, in horror's gaze intent :
While shrinking, shuddering, with convulsive start,
From each dull shock, that smote her unfenc'd heart.
How could she doubt, in those dire sounds, to know
Her champion's knell ; her young heart's hopeless woe !

'Tis past. The pang is o'er : the hope, the strife.
Congeal'd Death's ice-film o'er the springs of life.
Still'd, sudden, all the heart's wild throbs : and there
She stands, in all the calmness of despair,
Gazing on that cold tide. And there *had* stood,
But that a corse, slow-drifting down the flood,

The link, disrupt, of consciousness renew'd.
Sluggish the course, Death's Voy'ger lone pursued,
Down the vext flood, that headlong hurries by :
As, pausing oft where large the pebbles lie,
It yields, reluctant, to the stream, once more,
And rolls in weary languor, as before :
Till caught, where tides, in conflict eddying, meet,
'Tis backward whirl'd and wafted to her feet.

She watch'd its progress, with unshrinking eye.
Her suffering spirit had been wound too high,
To dread an added pang. Her heart had grown
Strangely familiar, with the freezing tone
Of desolation, ruin and despair.
E'en as some stream ; that late, thro' meads most fair ;
'Mid gleams of sunshine, echoes of delight,
Had laps'd in course, that lingering, baffled sight ;
Now, sudden hurl'd, by Nature's dire caprice,
In madd'ning torture, down the precipice ;
No longer seeks t' inhale the azure dye,
Nor quaff the lucid lustre of the sky ;

Nor, on its bosom, ostentatious, bear
One flow'r, of all, that woo affection, there :
But darker grows, at every frenzied bound :
And takes its colour, from the crags around ;
And shunning all, that late was counted dear,
Courts, in its headlong path, new scenes of gloom and
fear.

But, when she bent o'er that still form (despair
Struggling 'gainst hope, life yet might linger there)
Where, in the torrent half-immers'd, he lay,
Stirr'd by the waves and sprinkled by their spray ;
And from the head, that shrouding cloak unwound,
His lapse had wreath'd, in many a fold, around :
The act reveal'd—not him she look'd for, there :
But pale, death-seal'd, the features of St. Clair.
Fixt in the last convulsion, which had wrought
The wreck of life, the overthrow of thought.
Yet sparing each bold feature's classic line ;
Had marr'd that gravure of the Hand Divine,
With shade of dire, mysterious horror ; wrought
Into the gazer's soul :—a madd'ning thought,

That had, perchance, in dream distemper'd shown
Its blighting, shrieking presence, glar'd and gone :
Nor e'er return'd, t' infuse its chill despair,
Till fixt and realiz'd, thus darkly, there.

That brow, as massive in its marble height,
As cliff, that broods o'er Ocean's stormy might,
Of Atlantean mind had form'd the shrine ;
Where a World's burthen ne'er had crush'd a line.
And still, like cliff of marble, hung serene,
Unchang'd, unfurrow'd, as it erst was seen :
Save, 'neath its clear, transparent surface straying,
One purple streak, the firebolt's path betraying.
But seem those eyes (Avert, sweet Maid, thine own)
Chang'd, as thro' horror's madd'ning gaze, to stone.
In the red lightning's all-destroying glare,
Whose eye met thine, and stopp'd thy heart? St. Clair.

Would'st ask her thoughts, who bended silent there,
O'er the sad ruins of a shrine, so fair ;
And gaz'd, or horror-struck, averted thence
The eye, that, spite of each imploring sense,

Resum'd, with dread perversity and vain,
A search, still pouring terror on her brain ?
Not simple horror. Not the shock, to know
In him, her rescuer erst, her deadliest foe.
But, more appalling far, the thought, that he
Had ta'en the death-plunge to eternity ;
Perverting powers, the highest, rarest given ;
Accurst of Man ; in impious war with Heaven.

She turn'd. The eye, had watch'd her infant play,
And beam'd *but* love, thro' many an after day,
Broods, fond and anxious, o'er that much-lov'd brow ;
Scanning each change of horror, hope or woe.
Oh ! as she sank, with struggling hopes opprest,
In those lov'd arms and o'er that hallow'd breast ;
The conflict past ; the dark, despairing mood
Rose on remembrance, like a crime of blood :
Craving *his* grace : who, with unquestion'd right
O'er all, had spar'd this holiest, best delight.

She stretch'd her arms, and speechless, strain'd her eyes
Up the dread mount, to which her fond hopes rise.

And, as her watchful Sire, in anxious haste,
On her fleet steed, his child, unconscious, plac'd ;
Heard not the thunder's sullen chariot roll ;
Nor felt the Earth grate, shuddering, to its pole,
In awful sympathy : nor, smoking down,
The fus'd sky rush, to deluge and to drown.

In angry conflict with the flinty ground,
The steel-arm'd hoofs of many coursers sound :
Swift climbing, spite the elemental jar,
The road, that winds in tortuous curves, afar.
And foremost, aye, that pale and beauteous form ;
Sad, as some pitying angel of the storm,
Th' unwilling source of woe.—See ! see ! she quits
The beaten track ; like mountain spirit, flits
Around the brow of yon' terrific height ;
Where e'en the rock-deer curbs his bounding flight.
' Constance, sweet Constance, turn thee ! Certain death
Besets yon path ! ' But, vain the warning breath,
She speeds, regardless of the shouts, that rise,
To swell th' accordant discord of the skies.

And they may follow, at less desperate pace,
The beauteous leader of that frantic chase.

But safe, at length, thro' many a peril past,
The foremost horseman, (whom, nor raving blast,
Nor flooding rain, nor lightning's blinding glare
Could daunt,—all merg'd beneath a father's care)
Hath near'd, hath girt the brow, the summit won,
Where lie the firebolt's ghastly victims strewn :
So late instinct with life : Now, less than those
Storm-ruffled shrubs, that howl the dirge of their repose.

Here stands his daughter's palfrey, drooping, lone :
The sell unfill'd ; the beauteous tenant gone.

But whither gone ? The shrieking blast, his ear
Assails, with wail, wild, desolate and drear,

As tortur'd ghost's. His dim, distracted eye
Glares on the ghastly forms, that round him lie, }
To gather thence, a terrible reply.

'Constance, my child, my child.' The storm, how vain,
Compar'd with that, wild-raving through his brain !
Yet, are that storm, those sights of terror, all
The answer, deign'd to his distracted call.

Close clasping o'er his eyeballs, ag'd and dim,
(Drench'd by the storm without, the fires within,)
Those nerveless hands : his steed, self-guided, won
The fateful spot, he dar'd, nor seek, nor shun.

Here most are seen, the recent tokens, dire,
Which mark the course of Heav'n's destroying fire.
Here too, a ghastly group, stretch'd o'er his path,
Blood-drench'd, imply man's emulative wrath,
And there, hard by the verge of the descent,
O'er the pale form of her own warrior bent ;
With eye, that pour'd the soul of passion down,
And parted lips, and cheek of marble stone,
Constance appear'd. Foe sleeps with foe, around.
One lonely watchfire guards the funeral ground.

Stretch'd at her feet ; almost in her embrace,
In deathlike stillness : yet without a trace
Of violence, to mar the graceful mould
Of those pale features. Only, that each fold
Of his rich vest, was purpled with the tide,
That ooz'd, fast ebbing, from his wounded side ;

And which alone, while threat'ning death, had broke
 The fatal fury of the thunderstroke ;
 So near to all, life held for him, of bliss ;
 Yet so divided from his happiness,
 Young Vernon lay. The storm, that rag'd above,
 Had quench'd Earth's fires. It spar'd a Woman's love.
 It fell, unpitying, flood and thunder shed
 O'er that frail form, that meek, unshelter'd head :
 Which, like some storm-bent lily flower, droop'd low,
 Tow'rd the blood-sated soil, its brow of snow.
 Not yet, her care one faintest pulse had found,
 T' encourage hope. And, save that from the wound,
 At intervals, the sluggish tide would flow ;
 No sign of life, those aching eyes might know.

She felt throughout her frame, the growing chill
 Of baffled hope : the fires, that smoulder'd, still,
 At her heart's centre, waning, flickering fast.
 She droop'd, she bow'd ; faint-struggling to the last
 Against th' encroaching death. Her long, dark hair
 Stream'd o'er his neck and lay dishevell'd, there,

In many a heavy fold. And, though his eye,
So long, fast-seal'd from her fond scrutiny,
Did then uncloset : and, from his heaving breast,
Words, whispering, breath'd ; whose burthen was exprest
In her lov'd name : the blissful message came
Too late, to reallume life's subtil flame :
Which, lighting up her eye with transient fire,
Seem'd, the next moment, darkly to expire.
O'er the cold bosom of her lover strown ;
Their dark locks mingled, their pale cheeks in one :
Their hearts, which throb'd in most accordant thrill,
Yet undivided, now the pulse grows still ;
She bow'd, she fell.—The rude storm spent its might
O'er an ag'd brow ; a lone and fire-scath'd height.

END OF CANTO V.

L'ENVOYE

L' ENVOYE.



AND died they both? So young; love's promise bright
Just then, so fair, unfolding to their sight?

Glass'd (as in sage Magician's crystal sphere
The summon'd shapes of absent friends appear)
Two pale, cold forms my mental vision fill;
Borne in rude litters, from that fire-scath'd hill.

Shifts the dim scene. On couches, pillow'd, lie
The same pale forms: and friends watch, anxious, by.



Again a change. Upon the mountain height,
Pale, in her beauty, walks that form of light ;
With heart, that quails in terror, to each breath,
Voic'd from the field of carnage and of death.

Now, all is indistinct. A struggling maze
Of shapes, dim seen, as thro' a blood-red haze :
Emerging whence, one form, distinct, I trace,
First in the charge and foremost in the chase.
Pale, as when, late, the fire-scath'd soil he press'd,
And ooz'd, scarce stanch'd, the life-tide from his breast.

Anon are chang'd the scene, the very land.
Before the altar of their fathers stand
Those well-known forms. No longer blanch'd, I ween,
His cheek : though scars upon the brow are seen.
And, hiding those, that seam his manly breast,
Th' insignia proudest of his country, rest.
And she ? More beauteous than the dream by day
O'er which young poet sighs his soul away :
I see her, by her eyes' pure, spirit light,
My heart refreshing, with a strange delight.

Pale, it may be, by Memory's fond compare,
Yet Love's young rose hath kiss'd the lily there.
For Horror, chill Despair and sleepless Dread,
Long months her guests, from that young heart are fled.
Chas'd, like the phantoms of some dire unrest,
To leave her, from their thrall, more fully blest.
To lend a deeper, holier, tenderer dye,
To the sweet spirit fire, that lights her eye ;
And chasten, not abate her heart's fond pride,
To be, in sight of Earth and Heaven, *his* bride.

The Vision fades. Like all sweet Things, is gone.
The Minstrel's heart sighs, desolate and lone.
Ah ! must each glimpse of bliss, vouchsaf'd his sight
Be instant-quench'd, in all-absorbing night ?

FINIS.



THE PARTING HOUR

THE PARTING HOUR.



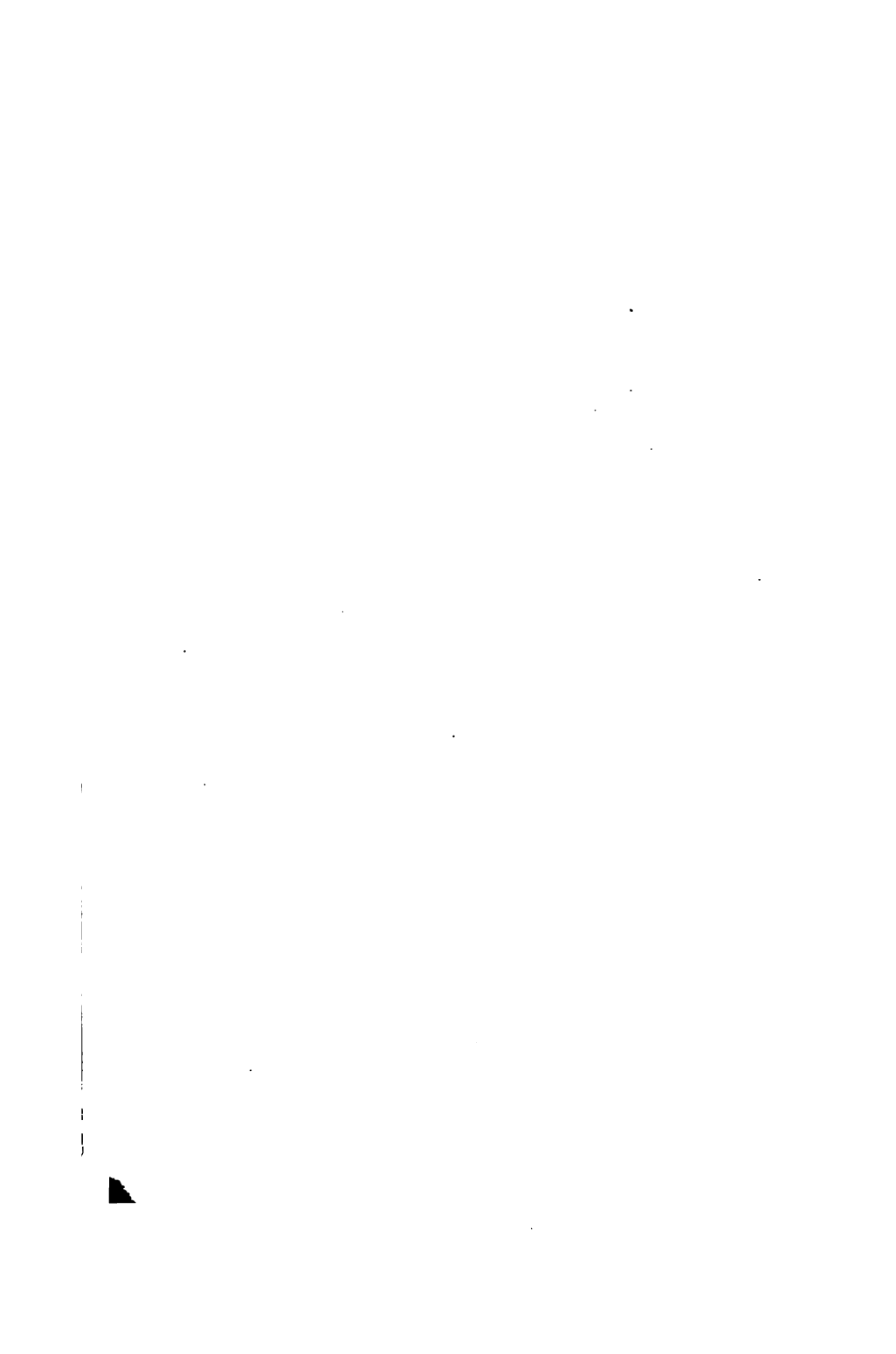
WHEN sullen tolls life's parting hour,
And I to thee must breathe
That farewell word of blighting power,
The curse and sting of Death.
Then, check thy grief, thy sobs restrain,
And let thy gentle voice essay,
To soothe me with that hallow'd strain,
So lov'd of both, when both were gay :
Buoyant, then, the step that bore us,
And the World lay bright, before us ;
Peace, the halcyon brooding o'er us ;
Sorrow, far away.

Methinks my soul would lighter wing
Her new and venturous flight,
Buoy'd on the song, which thou canst sing,
To regions of delight ;
Where newer strains, but none more dear,
With rapture thrill the ent'ring guest,
And thine, alone, be wanting there,
To make him fully blest.
Breathe, then breathe those trancing numbers,
While peaceful death my spirit cumbers,
Tranquil as that Heav'n of slumbers,
Pillow'd on thy breast.

Thine, thine should be the latest breath
That vibrates on mine ear,
When call'd from thine embrace by Death,
A heavenly choir to hear ;
While still in every Angel strain
My Seraph's voice I fondly trace,
And search the glowing choir, in vain,
For thee, Heav'n's crowning grace.

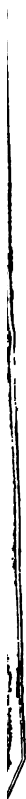
For love so twines my heart about thee ;
Memory shrines thee, so devoutly ;
Lonely were my soul, without thee,
 E'en in that blest place.

And when, within its narrow hall,
 The heart, which throbs for thee,
Shall silent rest ; and thou shalt call
 In vain, fond girl, on me.
Then, be nor pomp, nor mourner near ;
 But if thou canst thy sobs restrain ;
Awake once more, and I shall hear,
 From Heaven, that well-remember'd strain ;
And if my wings avail to bear me,
Leave those joys, awhile to tarry ;
Hover, fondly, round thee, Fairy ;
 Bless thee, yet, again.



THE RE-UNION

(Printed for private circulation in 1854)



THE RE-UNION.



DEEP in the liquid crystal shrin'd,
On bed of golden sand ;
Where, no unbroken ray may find
The billow-covered strand—
Where coral rocks their splinter'd peaks,
Of countless hues, display ;
And many a sea-plant vainly seeks
The light of upper day.
Imbath'd in depths of lustrous light,
Uncertain, wavering, aye :
As when the young, sweet queen of night
Impearls Spring's dewy sky ;



A beauteous form extended lies
In deep and tranç'd repose :
Clos'd are the curtains of her eyes,
Her cheek hath lost its rose ;
Strown, clustering o'er her ivory neck,
The heavy ringlets lie ;
That cheek's transparent lilies fleck,
And shroud the curtain'd eye.
Such sense of desolation sweet,
Untimely tempests bring :
When, ruthless, strewing at our feet,
The flowers and hopes of Spring.

His sacred trust old ocean feels,
And stills his surge's roar ;
A sweet and solemn anthem peals
O'er the far-resounding shore—
The Kraken huge draws nigh to gaze,
Expands his hundred eyes ;
His hundred arms, a wildering maze,
Th' entangled bark surprise.

But here, with sudden awe oppress,
His terrors lays aside ;
With drooping eyes and mournful crest
Hangs o'er the peerless Bride :
And trooping Mermaids cease the song,
Nor comb their sea-green hair ;
But group'd around, a silent throng,
Stand, chill'd and drooping, there.

See, where the Mistress of the Deep
Her march majestic bends,
O'er floods that roll and waves that leap,
Her sceptre calm extends.
The gales of Heaven with tempests rife,
Her bellying canvass fill ;
O'er all sea-wanderers, arm'd for strife,
She rules, with despot will.
With muzzles black, a surly row,
The bull dogs grim of war,
Rang'd tier on tier, threat death and woe,
And thunderstrike afar.

The dancing wave insults her prow,
And leaps divided back :
For many a rood, the waters show
The ponderous Monster's track :
Yet, with the fawn or naiad's step,
O'er Edith's grave she treads ;
Where all the nurselings of the Deep
In reverence droop their heads.

Proudly the Ocean Queen sweeps on ;
But in her wake doth float
O'er ocean's waste, forlorn and lone,
A small, unmasted boat.
A frenzied form o'erhangs the prow,
Down gazing, deep and long ;
The wild locks shade his haggard brow ;
Wild words inspire his tongue.
' My Edith, wilt thou ever lie
All cold and silent here ?
Nor e'er unclothe that radiant eye,
Thy lover's heart to cheer ?

Ah! must that bright, heart-wildering smile
 With all its dimples sleep;
Nor more his bursting grief beguile,
 Who would, but cannot weep?
No longer wilt thou roam with me,
 Amid the flowers of Spring,
The fresh-apparell'd woods to see
 And hear the linnet sing?
And must I wander, all alone,
 Where once I roam'd with thee;
Where thy sweet presence, loveliest one,
 Was all the charm to me?
And when sad Autumn, stealing nigh,
 Shall strew, o'er tree and bower,
Those tints, which made thee muse and sigh,
 In many a happier hour—
And when the long, drear winter eve,
 Once charm'd by love and thee,
A thousand, thousand thoughts shall breathe,
 All withering thoughts, to me:
Say, must that drear, that silent hall,
 Ne'er hear thy voice again,

And, on the echo-banish'd wall,
Thy lute, untun'd remain ?
And who, or what, shall comfort bring,
As sweeps the night-breeze by,
And wakes to life each silent string,
In torturous melody ?

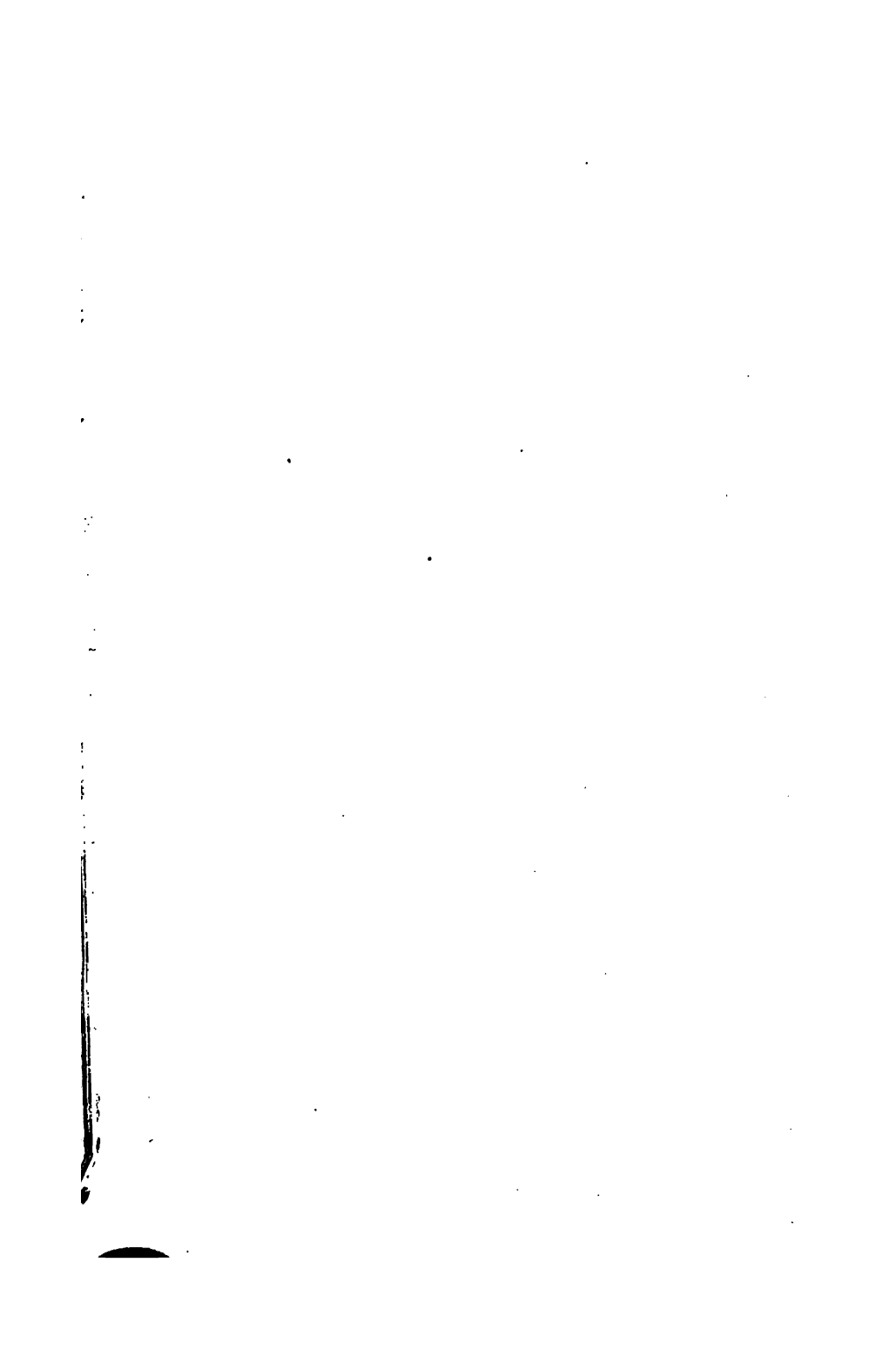
'Wake, my belov'd, my Edith wake,
Thy sleep hath lasted long ;
Those slumbers from thine eyelids shake,
That spell from thy dear tongue.
And can my voice not reach thee, Love,
That thou yield'st no reply ?
Why sleeps the blush, this glance could move,
Love lighted at mine eye ?
Or dost thou wait, until I press
Those silent lips to mine ;
Would'st cheat me of one soft caress,
By this still pause of thine ?
I come, my Love, my Bliss, my Bride ;
Life is but where thou art ;
Nor fate, nor death shall long divide
Our one, commutual heart.'

A flash was seen, a plunge was heard ;—
At morn, an unmann'd boat,
Drifting with wind and tide, appear'd
O'er Ocean's waste to float.
The Bridegroom his young Bride hath found ;
The Bride her partner blest ;
And both, in Ocean's depths profound,
A sweet and solemn rest.

1829.

THE APPEAL

(Printed for private circulation in 1854)



THE APPEAL.



Hush'd is the breeze ; the fairy cloud hath furl'd
Her purple wing, soft lighting in the vale ;
Dim sounds, faint echoes of some distant world
Now languid rise, now lingering melt and fail.
Thro' dews of eve Love's star is trembling pale ;
Pale beams the crescent of the Queen of Night,
Afloat in Heaven, without oar, helm or sail ;
Yet, there to rule supreme, by Beauty's might,
O'er suns and rolling worlds, that star th' etherial height.

Have we not wander'd, oft, in this fair scene,
Thy hand, like fairy treasure, clasp'd in mine ?
And if 'neath skies of Spring or Heavens serene,
Mine eye was blind to every charm but thine,

Say, did'st thou chide ? And when the mountain pine
Flung o'er the gale of night its ocean-moan,
And the Night-bird pour'd forth her thrilling chime ;
If, mind, soul, sense, absorb'd in thee alone,
I heard that heart's sweet throb ;—did'st chide me, love-
liest one ?

Unchang'd that scene to other eyes,
Earth's bloom as sweet, as soft the skies ;
Yet Death's chill blight o'er all is grown ;
Since thou, the soul of all, art flown.
As fair, on earth's fond, faithful breast,
The golden sun sinks down to rest ;
Flooding the course, he late did hold,
With sheeny mist of purpled gold ;
As fair, as soft the haze-depths grow
In vale and dell, out-spread below :
And thro' them seen, in soften'd line,
The forests dense of mountain pine ;
The cedar's stalwart ranks, array'd,
And Rhododendron's crimson shade ;
Where, trooping from the mountain brow,
They muster dense in gloom, below.

All, save the oak—he scorns to shoot
In baser soil his lordly root.
He better loves the greeting rude
Of tempest, with the mountain brow ;
And, thron'd in Alpine solitude,
To watch the eagle soar, below ;
Cleaving the liquid fields of air,
His kindred thunderbolt to bear ;—
He scorns the deep, sequester'd dell,
And finds a grander, prouder spell,
High poised above the drear abyss,
Or brooding o'er the precipice.

Scenes of such grandeur once possess'd
A magic influence o'er my breast :
For, sever'd from my fellow-men,
By taste and feeling all mine own ;
Nature my earliest love hath been,
My page her charms, my seat her throne ;
My friends her rocks and hills and trees,
My canopy her ether blue ;

My sweetest draught her mountain breeze,
My richest gems her spangled dew :
The gurgling murmur of her rills,
The plaintive echo of her grove,
The rattling of her chariot wheels,
The torrent, brawling from above ;
And far excelling all the rest,
The hush-heard whisper of her breast,
Which, thrilling thro' my soul, made known
That she was mine, and mine alone ;—
These, these had ever form'd for me,
Strains of unrivall'd melody ;
Until one voice dispell'd the charm ;
Supplanting it with tones more blest :
And, fading these, life's halcyon calm
Fled, with their witchery wild, my breast.
My ties to Nature all were rent,
Her aspect, alter'd, now :
Reproachfully, on me was bent
Her erst-unruffled brow.
And thus, in loneliness and gloom,
Thou wert my spirit's ruling star ;

Thy ray did still my heart consume,
Unseen, but scorching from afar.
I clasp'd thine image in my mind ;
I saw, felt, heard, but only thee ;
Save the lone fane where thou wert shrin'd,
Earth's courts were barr'd to me :
And if to Heaven I turn'd despairing,
Thou, in each Heaven-tun'd thought, wert sharing :
Burthen of every soul-fraught prayer,
Thy name, sweet girl, was murmur'd there—
I ask'd no blessing, but to see
Heaven's choicest bliss descend on thee.
Ah ! blame me not. The wounded bird,
That once hath heard the bulbul's song,
Must ponder o'er each note, each chord
Of that wild measure ; tho' the throng
Of woodland songsters, vainly gay,
Should strive to while his dream away,
And raise his drooping lid and wing :—
Their notes are solitude to him :
He hears a voice they cannot hear,
He feels a spell they cannot feel ;

His outward wound attracts no care,
For who the riven heart can heal ?
He would not, if he might, forego
The spell which causes all his woe.
And when life's subtil spark at length
Neglected, sheds its dying ray ;
It fires him with unwonted strength,
Which shakes his prison walls of clay.
That strain of deep-ton'd minstrelsy,
Long-hoarded, ponder'd, brooded o'er,
Lights up awhile his heavy eye,
Till soul and voice run o'er.
In one wild measure, deep and strong,
It vibrates from his quivering tongue ;
As if each meditative power,
Each lonely day, each silent hour,
Had been employ'd, engross'd alone,
In perfecting that wondrous tone :
As if that first, last strain had been
His waking thought, his slumbering dream,
Since first he plum'd his wing to fly,
Or tun'd his heart to minstrelsy.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN



THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

‘AM I so chang’d in form and face, that all, the child
disown,

Who lov’d the mountain path to trace, companionless and
lone ;

And back return’d, with bliss elate, unlock’d his fancy’s
store

To loving hearts, since still’d by fate, to throb and love
no more ?

‘It may be, that a fiery clime ; that days of toil and woe,
And nights of care, have vied with time, to strew my
head with snow :

It may be, that the helm of steel hath vied with pain and
care,

With mental torture’s rack, and wheel, my sun-scorch’d
brow to bare.

' But Zaidee, thou in whose sweet breast, I deem'd mine
image shrin'd,

Imparadis'd 'mid musings blest of that fair, guileless
mind—

Thou, who hadst vow'd with that sweet breath, confirm'd
with those pure eyes,

That heart, reserv'd for life, for death, my inviolate
paradise.

' Had all prov'd traitors—thou, sweet maid, the leal and
fond and true,

I'd blest the very guile, that shed on thee a lustre new.

But look, ere yet my back I turn on country, kin and race,
My fathers' tombs and portraits stern ; my once lov'd,
natal place ;

' Look once. Is this, mine eye, so strange, my form so
alien grown,

That thou can'st not, despite the change, discern me for
thine own ?

Those trees, that on their rugged rind, our names im-
blended bore ;

Are they uprooted by the wind, t' attest our love, no more ?

The stream, that murmuring soft and low, thy whisper'd
voice might stay ;
Say, hath it ceas'd its joyous flow—a witness past away ?

‘Those trees still o’er me glooming frown, still bear our
names imprest ;
Time that can pluck an Empire down, hath spar’d those
tokens blest.
The stream still murmurs as of yore, when thy fond,
whisper’d vow,
Its dancing wave, delighted bore ;—a foam-bell bears it
now.

‘Went I not forth, to seek the fame, might make me
worthy thee ?
What Eastern Land but knows my name, and trembling
honours me ?
Where have *thy* charms not triumphs won, in council or
in fight ?
The captive, freed from dungeon lone, bless’d thee, for
life and light.

'Thou deign'st not, in this much scarr'd brow, the brow
of yore to see.—

What sword might there *one* furrow plough, that was not
ta'en for thee?

What! can those tokens of his truth, thy lover's form
disguise,

So that each trait, thou lov'dst in youth, is hidden from
thine eyes?

'Then, country of my love, farewell; home, that my
childhood rear'd,

My fathers' tombs, where silent dwell, their awful shades
rever'd;

All I inherit from my race, all my right arm hath won;
Farewell, for aye!—One resting place remains, and only one.'

Sternly he turn'd him to depart, in pride of his despair:
Cold was his eye, and cold his heart; cold blew the keen,
night air:

The false world spread before his sight, in its cold, wintry
gloom:

A colder chill, a deeper night, he sought—the joyless tomb.

A shriek o'er that ic'd spirit rang; and through the portal
high

A form of beauty frantic sprang; hope, terror glazed her
eye;

Her step o'ertook the Wanderer lone; in voice that woe
express'd,

She faltering gasp'd, 'thine own, thine own;' then sank
on his lov'd breast.

'Twas his betroth'd, his soul's rever'd, the idol long ador'd:
Struck speechless, when he first appear'd, whose death
she'd long deplor'd;

She dar'd not trust her wilder'd eye, her throbbing, burn-
ing brain;

But stood in speechless agony, fast thrall'd in passion's
chain.

But, as he turn'd, for aye to part, his profile cut the
light:

Traits, graven on her inmost heart, reviv'd on her charm'd
sight.

A tone her shuddering soul transpierc'd ; to her, despair's
dire knell ;

The self-same tone, which utter'd first, his sad and long
farewell.

Her trembling heart the witness own'd ; she flew his step
to stay ;—

Joy's sudden tide her senses drown'd ; she, sobbing,
swoon'd away.—

He shuns not now his father's hall, their tombs, nor
portraits grim ;

He bears no scar, but serves to call fresh blessing down,
on him—

She, whose sweet light hath cheer'd him on, through peril,
toil and woe ;

His star of Hope is nobly won ; e'en death, scarce parts
them now.

CHILDHOOD

(Part of this was printed for private circulation in 1854)



CHILDHOOD.



SEASON of hopes and joys and fears,
Brief antepast of withering years,
Reign of the warm confiding breast,
Why pause ? why doubt to style thee, blest ?

Small are thy cares ; thy woes are light ;
Thy sorrows brief ; thy prospects bright,

To those of after days :
Gay is thy spirit's buoyant wing ;
And round thee smiles perpetual spring ;

Brief showers and sunny rays.
And thou hast kiss'd, with lip of flame,

Life's cup of mingled flow :
Its nectar thrills thy glowing frame ;
Forgotten every woe :

And pants thine inexperience'd breast,
With eager thirst, to quaff the rest.

And hoards of glittering thought are thine :
Realms, unexplor'd, of bliss divine :
Where, at thy will, rise fairy bowers,
And gush from Earth spring's treasur'd flowers ;
And rills and fountains glide and play ;
And birds glance past, of plumage gay ;
Or fill earth, sky, with strains, that rise
For thee and souls in Paradise.

Now, down the hill, I see thee fly,
With foot of fire and sparkling eye.
What mountain roe is half so free ?
What lark so gay ? What woodland bee ?
Venting thy fancy's rich o'erflow
In carol, birdlike, blithe and low.
The very breeze, that rustles by,
O'er primrose pale and violet shy,
Laden with songs of blissful things ;
Bears not such freshness on its wings,

(Sprinkling Man's sadden'd heart with glee ;)
As this brief glimpse, fair Child, of thee.

When in the East, another Morn,
To bless Earth's bounteous breast is born ;
Her dewy wings are thine, t' explore
Realms, vision'd dim, in fairy lore ;
Where thou, supreme o'er all, wilt reign,
Lord of the mount, the wood, the plain ;
Building high castles, which thy frown,
Potent as Jove's, may rattle down :
Or leading forth, to bloodless fight,
Thy hosts, in glittering armour dight,
With prancing steed and banner fold,
And nodding plumes, and crests of gold,
And trumpet's spirit-stirring note,
Pour'd, thrilling, from thy slender throat :
While carnage stalks, and legions yield,
And headless thistles strew the field,

When, o'er his gorgeous couch of rest,
The Sun sinks, tranç'd, on Earth's fair breast ;

Languid with bliss : while faintly rise,
Scarce breath'd, scarce felt, the Day-God's sighs.
Whose foot, but thine, is free to stray
O'er purpled clouds, th' enchanted way,
E'en to Heav'n's golden gates ; where rise, }
In vault Earth-bas'd, the sapphire skies ; }
Whose structure, Eld perverse, denies ; }
And thou, on them thy hand wilt lay,
And pluck a star or two away.

And when, o'er yon' high mountain cliff,
The Moon hath launch'd her fairy skiff,
Amid the star-isl'd seas of night
To float, supreme, in maiden might ;
Swifter than glance of shooting star,
Thy wing o'ertakes her pearly car ;
With her, that blissful voy'ge to hold
O'er seas of chrysolite and gold ;
Down to the gorgeous palace gate,
Where Day's bright Monarch holds his state,
In adamantine courts and halls,
Of glorious gem-encrusted walls.

While, breathing flames of fiery light,
The Steeds of Day recruit their might ;
And, from their golden yoke releas'd,
At golden stalls, full-garnish'd, feast
On Lotos, which the jocund Hours
Cull, with their wealth of dew-sprent flowers.
Or graze the marge of streams, that swell,
Through meads of deathless Asphodel.

And there is one, thou know'st full well ;
More beauteous far, than words can tell ;
Who, lingering near, on palfrey white,
Too often cheats thy longing sight.
An image, wrought from all things fair,
That haunt the woods, the meads, the air :
From fragrance of all budding flowers ;
From golden gleams in summer bowers ;
From music, breath'd in field and grove,
By lark so blithe, or earnest dove ;
From powers, which stir in thy young breast,
Prompting to bless and be most blest.

Whose angel smile, that smile repealing,
O'er thy cradled slumber stealing ;
As tender, true ; to hope belongs,
Spring's dewy pledge and young birds' songs.

Yes ! there is one, supreme and lone,
In secret heart, thy very own ;
Tho' coy and shy, as fawn of May ;
Who, if a breeze presume to stray,
Where silvery aspens, o'er the lake,
In shivering whispers, quail and quake ;
Half frolic fun, half panic fright,
Finds pretext fair, to mock thy sight.

For her, is wrought each high emprise ;
Her praise, thy fame ; thy sun, her eyes :
The soul of all things sweet and fair,
Beaming to bless thee, ev'rywhere :
Too rarely seen : and felt and known
By sunshine of the heart alone.
Bright keystone, to thine arch of Might ;
Sweet gracenote, to thy wild delight ;

Most winsome queen, that ever wove,
With daisy stems, the chain of love ;
Or paddled, barefoot, in the rill,
Or pluck'd the dainty daffodil ;
Or launch'd, upon some mimic sea,
Her lily-freighted Argosie ;
Bound for some isle, afar that lies
In sunny seas, 'neath Orient skies ;
Sanded with pearls, embower'd with trees ;
Whose golden boughs, to ev'ry breeze
Shed dew of brilliants, sparkling bright,
Grapes, sapphire or pale chrysolite ;
And blushful rubies, rich and fine,
For cherry, peach or nectarine.
Such, as Aladdin's spell-arm'd hand
From orchards cull'd, of Fairy land :
Or (Prince of Sailors) Sindbad found,
By serpents watch'd, in glen profound.

Are all these wonders thine, fair child,
This wealth, this glory undefil'd ?

This power, to earthly kings unknown ?
This boundless realm and matchless throne ?
And throne and pow'r and wealth above,
That young, sweet dream, thy Ladye Love ?
And hanging head and drooping eye,
Would they, wild Thing, thy bliss deny ?

Is, then, each light and trivial care
The utmost, thy frail strength can bear ?
And doth each pang of early woe
Suffice, to pierce thy bosom through ?
And, if thy sorrows trivial be,
Say'st thou, they're all in all, to thee ?
Ah ! what avail thy prospects fair,
If only, Truth be wanting there ?
Or what, thy verdure-bearing spring,
If the first wind a storm may bring ?
Or how can this, thy chequer'd lot
Be bless'd ? If thou know it not ?
Yet, Childhood, all thy woes confest,
I *must*, and all will style thee, blest.

I, too, have sunn'd me, in thy smile ;
Have tried thine ev'ry proffer'd pleasure ;
Have prov'd thy falsehood, known thy guile :
Yet love thee, still, as ever.
For that same hand, which set me free
From thy gentle tyranny ;
Hath crush'd my hopes, and laid them low,
And ting'd the locks of youth with snow.
And I must meet my fellow men,
Not, as in youth I met their smile ;
Not loving, trusting, frank as then :
But watchful of their guile :
Must check the yearning of the heart,
Must quell the sparkle of the eye ;
And trace the gladiator's part,
When warm vows flourish high.

And, if to love, my lot should be :
Then, peace farewell ! Woe ! woe ! is me !
That cherub, who, to childish heart,
Could aye such gushing bliss impart ;

A demon, with our growth is grown ;
A fury, rending, one by one,
Each nerve, that thrill'd to transport wild,
The loving, trusting, guileless child.

Then, slighted love. Or drearer far,
The downfall of our worshipp'd star,
From her throne of bliss and light,
To dimness, or the gloom of night.
Or, if our love meet fond return,
Our Star, in undimm'd glory, burn ;
Yet, Death, the tyrant, ever near,
To blight the bud, most fair and dear ;
The gloom of his black wing will throw,
And thrall in slavery of woe.

When yet a child, and sorrow press'd ; }
A paradise of sacred rest }
Receiv'd me, at a Mother's breast. }
No paradise, the man must know ;
Save that, beyond the Dead Sea's flow.

And growling human minds have striven
To cloak in gloom, each hue of Heaven.
So that, the voy'ge to that blest shore,
Too many, as a curse, deplore ;
And him, who frees man's pain-drawn breath,
Array in terrors, dread, as Death.
And should I paint the scene that lies
Before me sketch'd, as paradise ;
Th' unholy scorn of minds devout
Life's tranquil peace would all blot out.

But, ah ! that woe, what tongue shall tell,
Which dogs stern Manhood's day ;
When, dew's of morn, that sweetly fell,
And sparkled gay, o'er mead and dell,
Drinks up life's sultry ray ?
When that bright promise, Hope supplied
To youthful heart, hath droop'd and died.
A heart, whose gay, untarnish'd wing
Would, still, the bright perspective follow ;
And what to-day had fail'd to bring,
Still trusted to the morrow.

O'er all, stern Truth has cast his blight.
The morrow hath no sunny light :
But woes, to-day escap'd, shall borrow
Wings, t' o'ertake our flight to-morrow.

O Childhood, thou whose uncloy'd wing
Can, blithe as lark upsoaring, spring.
Who hast not watch'd th' untimely blight
Of each fond promise, fair to sight.
Thou, that Hope's smiling votary art ;
Thou, that hast yet, a trusting heart ;
Thou, whom Death's shadow ne'er dismay'd ;
Thou, that hast never been betray'd ;
Thou, for whose use, on Earth still rise
The flowers and fruits of Paradise ;
Thou, that hast yet a home of rest,
A country, and a Mother's breast ;
How can I doubt, to style thee, blest ?


LUCKNOW

The following is an attempt to arrange in verse, for music, an anecdote quoted from the 'Jersey Times' of December 10, 1857, as having been received from M. Banneroy, physician to the Mussur Raja (a prince, of whom we have not elsewhere heard), and as having been written by him from the lips of the lady, mentioned in the narration. This lady is represented as having been the wife of an officer, in the regiment garrisoning Lucknow : while Jessie Brown, the heroine who attended upon her, was wife of a corporal of the same corps. The simplicity and pathos of the original narrative, to which no versification can do justice, excited at the time much attention and curiosity ; and the truth of the anecdote, and even the existence of Jessie Brown, were called in question. The reader who peruses the original Notice at the close of the verse, will we think allow, that if M. Banneroy was not a correct historian, he was no ordinary poet.

LUCKNOW.

WEARY months had wasted, slow,
Their sands of peril, want and woe
Death had laid our Noblest low
Where Goomtie flow'd in blood.

Yell'd round our crumbling walls, the foe ;
Pour'd shot and shell in ceaseless flow ;
And the deadly mine was charg'd below
And Goomtie claim'd our blood.



No hope was ours beyond that day,
To hold those wolfish hordes, at bay :
The shame, the torture who should say,
Ere Goomtie lap our blood.

'Twas then, her fears to frenzy wrought,
Her mistress fair, young Jessie sought ;
And thus pour'd forth her soul distraught,
While Goomtie wallow'd blood.

II.

'Is there nae hope ? Ah ! leddie dear,
'Tis bitter, thus to die,
With not one pitying voice to cheer,
One kind, one human eye.
Another sun perchance, may set,
Another ne'er may rise ;
Ere, trampled 'neath those murderous feet,
This body mangled lies.
Ah ! were it but to part with life,
By Nature', Fate's decree !
But this !—The stab of murderous knife,
The torturer's hellish glee !

The scorpion-sting is in my brain,
If I but think at a'
On all the morrow's shame and pain,
Ere Death's black curtain fa'.'

III.

' Hush Jessie, hush ! There's One, above,
Knows best what suits us all :
He loves us with a father's love :
'Tis life, to list his call :
Whether in cannon's thunder peal,
Or murderer's frantic yell :
Whether in angel tones it steal,
Or blasphemy 'of Hell.
For, all subserve his gracious will :
And e'en th' assassin's knife
Defeats the miscreant' purpose, still,
And gives his victim, life.
There, rest thy head upon my lap,
Poor lassie, sleep awhile ;
Safe in his love; whate'er may hap ;
A love, that knows not guile.'

IV.

She sank, o'erworn with woe and fear.

Her mind—'tis wandering, now :

For she murmur'd 'Ye'll wake me, leddie dear,

When feyther returns from pleugh.'

So, sleep fell, dewlike, from on high,

In cannon's, shell's despite.

To her feet she hath sprung, with flashing eye,

And scream of intense delight.

'Dinna ye hear?—Not hear it, noo !

Clear, clear I catch the swell ;

O'er cannon's roar and yell of foe

And boom of deadly shell.

Not hear it !—Were I could in death,

Beneath this blood-plash'd sand ;

Thy voice would summon back my breath,

Mine ain, my feyther Land.

Nae ! I'm na dreaming, Leddie dear,

I *am* na daft, nor fie :

The piebroch's voice is in mine ear,

The Gregaragh's gathering crie.'

V.

Where, at their guns, the minish'd crew,
Undaunted, stemm'd the war ;
Like flash of shooting star, she flew ;
Her voice rose clear and far.
' We're sav'd ! Hark, hark, the slogan hear,
The grandest of them a' !
The Gregaragh's piebroch peals its cheer,
Where a thousand firm steps fa'.
Great God ! thou'st saved us at our need :
For what the brunt can stand,
And the arm of might, and the foot of speed,
Of that freeborn, mountain band.'

VI.

They paus'd :—the reeking gun forsook,
Each nerve intent to hear.—
Then, his head, the stern, old Captain shook
And died each heart with fear.

And rose the plain, from Woman's breast,
As when her first-born dies :
And Jessie' self sank down, opprest,
And in anguish clos'd her eyes.

VII.

A pause intense, as hope expires.
Again erect she stands,
Inflam'd as with prophetic fires,
Flush'd cheek and outspread hands.
'What ! are ye deaf? Hark ! hear that swell,
Distinct o'er the cannon's hoarse roar.
Yes ! the Campbells are coming from mountain
and glen,
In the flash of the broad claymore.
The Campbells are coming, heigho ! heigho !
As the foes that beset us shall rue :
And there's Havelock fearless and Outram the
peerless,
And Neil, ever noble and true.'

VIII.

'Twas true.—Distinct o'er shrieking shot,
 Guns' roar, and bursting shell,
 Rose notes, that ne'er could be forgot,
 The bagpipe's drone and swell.
 They heard.—They knelt, with awe opprest,
 On that blood-ennobled sod.
 Their Country's voice they knew ; confess'd
 The message of their God.
 And, as it swell'd more near and clear,
 Burst from that hero Band,
 One high, heart-thrilling, glorious cheer.
 ' God bless our father-land.
 God save our Queen, and bless
 The bold hearts, that onward press,
 Counting death, light :
 Heart-worn and minish'd, we
 Had well nigh despair'd of ye.
 God bless the true and free
 God guard the right.'

IX.

That mighty cheer rose high to Heaven,

And ere the echo died :

Without, an answering cheer was given

And the bagpipe shrill replied.

‘ Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And freends be left to pine,

By famine strown, and hostile shot,

And we forget Langsyne.

For auld langsyne, my dear,

For auld langsyne ;

We count each peril light to cheer

The freends of auld langsyne.’

X.

And where for months the hostile shot

Had crash’d its murderous way,

For foes, Heav’n’s cheerful light, who blot,

Athirst to spoil or slay,

Rush’d in, kind faces, smoke-begrim’d,

Kind eyes, that anxious scann’d ;

And friendly voices greeting chim'd,
 And hand clasp'd, loving, hand.
 And tears, stern anguish had repress,
 Gush'd forth in rapturous flow :
 And many a pray'r-lock'd callous breast,
 Lit deep emotion's glow.

XI.

(AIR—' *Here's a health to them that's awa'*)

' Oh ! shame, if our freends we'd forsa'en
 To pine in the gloom of despair !
 Their need of our succour, our hearts did sustain
 Neil, Havelock, Outram were there
 To cheer us :
 Heav'n sent us those spirits of fire,
 Impossible ventures to dare :
 Thro' them, was enkindled the quenchless desire,
 Which else had succumb'd in despair,
 For ever.'

ORIGINAL OF THE ABOVE.

RELIEF OF LUCKNOW.—On every side Death stared us in the face. No human skill could avert it any longer. We saw the moment approach, when we must bid farewell to Earth: yet, without feeling that unutterable horror, which must have been experienced by the unhappy victims at Cawnpoor. We were resolved rather to die, than to yield; and were fully persuaded, that in twenty-four hours all would be over. The Engineers had said so, and all knew the worst. We women strove to encourage each other, and to perform the light duties assigned to us; such as conveying orders to the batteries, and supplying the men with provisions, especially cups of coffee, which we prepared day and night. I had gone out, to make myself useful, in company with Jessie Brown, wife of a corporal in my husband's regiment. Poor Jessie had been in a state of restless excitement all through the siege; and had fallen away visibly within the last few days. A constant fever consumed her, and her mind wandered occasionally, especially that day, when the recollections of home seemed powerfully present to her. At last, overcome with fatigue, she lay down on the ground, wrapt up in her plaid. I sat beside her, promising to awaken her, when, as she said, "her father should return from the ploughing." She fell, at length, into a profound slumber, motionless and apparently breathless, her head resting on my lap. I myself could no longer resist the inclination to sleep, in spite of the continual roar of the cannon. Suddenly I was aroused by a wild,

unearthly scream close to my ear. My companion stood upright beside me, her arms raised and her head bent forward in the attitude of listening. A look of intense delight broke over her countenance. She grasped my hand, drew me toward her and exclaimed, "Dinna ye hear it? Dinna ye hear it? Ay I'm no dreamin': it's the slogan of the Highlanders! We're saved. We're saved!" Then, flinging herself on her knees, she thanked God with passionate fervour. I felt utterly bewildered. My English ears heard only the roar of the artillery; and I thought my poor Jessie was raving. But she darted to the batteries, and I heard her cry incessantly to the men, "Courage! courage! Hark to the slogan—to the McGregor, the grandest o' them a'. Here's help at last."

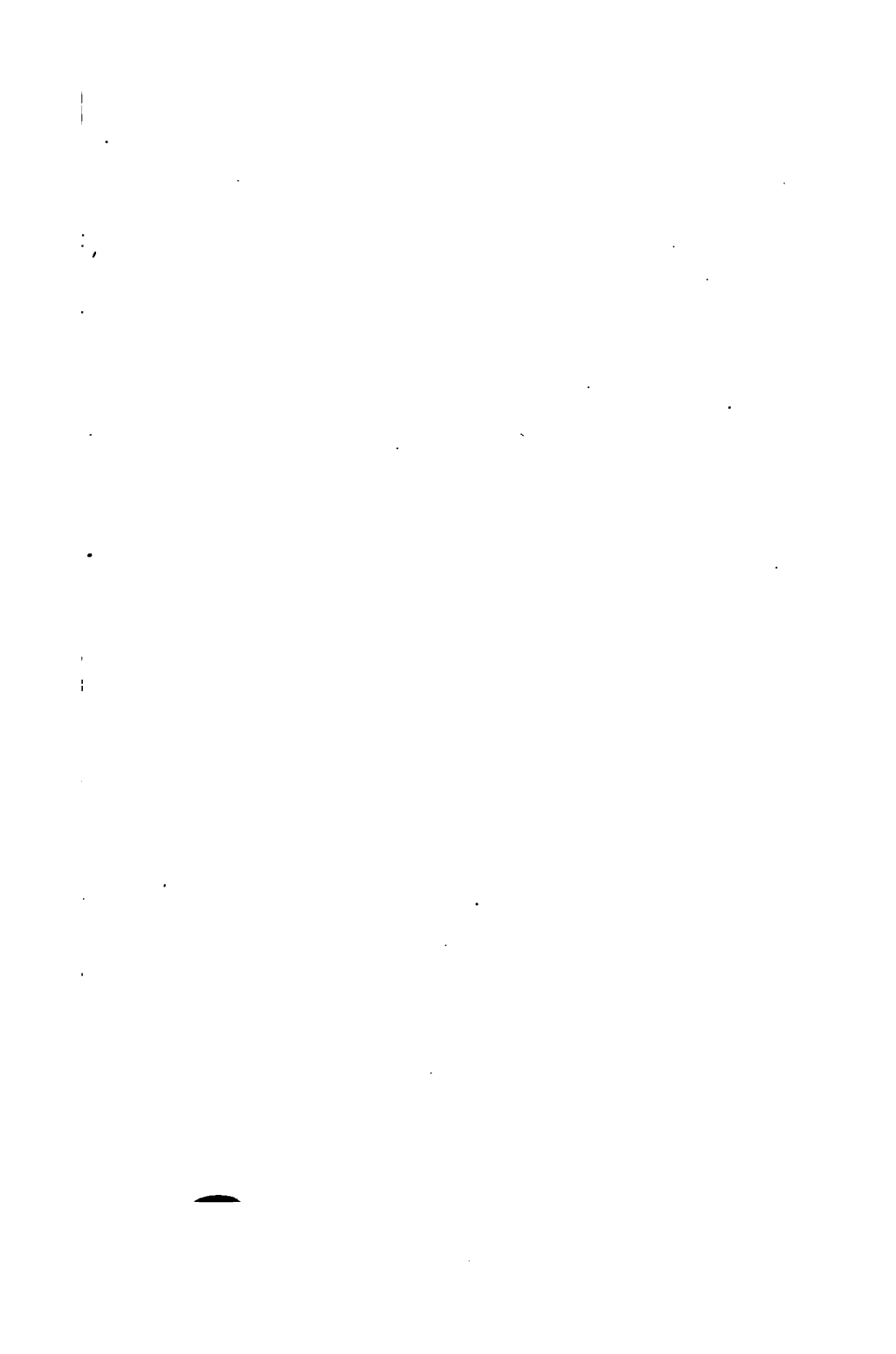
'To describe the effect of these words upon the soldiers, would be impossible. For a moment they ceased firing, and every soul listened in intense anxiety. Gradually, however, there arose a murmur of bitter disappointment; and the wailing of the women who had flocked to the spot, burst out anew, as the Colonel shook his head. Our dull, lowland ears heard nothing but the rattle of the musketry. A few moments more of this death-like suspense, of this agonising hope, and Jessie, who had again sunk on the ground, sprang to her feet and cried in a voice so clear and piercing that it was heard all along the line, "Will ye no believe it noo? The slogan has ceased indeed; but the Campbells are comin'! D'ye hear? d'ye hear?"

'At that moment, we seemed indeed to hear the voice of God in the distance; when the pibroch of the Highlanders brought us tidings of deliverance, for now there was no longer any doubt of the fact. That shrill, penetrating, ceaseless sound, which rose above all other sounds, could come, neither from the advance of the enemy, nor from the work of the sappers. No it was indeed the blast of the Scottish bagpipes, now shrill and harsh, as threatening vengeance on the foe; then in softer tones, seeming to promise succour to their friends in need.

'Never, surely, was there such a scene as that which followed. Not a heart in the Residency of Lucknow but bowed itself before God.

All by one simultaneous impulse fell upon their knees; and nothing was heard but bursting sobs and the murmured voice of prayer. Then all arose, and there rang out from a thousand lips a great shout of joy, which resounded far and wide and lent new vigour to that blessed pibroch. To our cheer of "God save the Queen," they replied by the well-known strain that moves every Scot to tears, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot!" After that, nothing else made any impression on me. I scarcely remember what followed. Jessie was presented to the General on his entrance into the fort; and, at the Officers' banquet, her health was drunk by all present, while the pipers marched round the table, playing once more the familiar air of "Auld langsyne."—*Jersey Times*, December 10, 1857.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX.

The following Lines which once belonged to the Conclusion, have been excerpted, as encumbering the Narrative.

THINE was it, first, young Willoughby, to stand
Thy Country's Champion, with thy dauntless Band.⁵²
What were thy thoughts bold youth, as rushing down
The living deluge summ'd thee to renown ?
Thy Native Land, which thou no more shalt see ?
Thy widow'd Parent, twice bereav'd in thee ?
Ah ! thoughts so tender, in the patriot's breast,
His soul but harden to each stern behest :
As yielding waves the war-blade's fire⁵³ condense
In edge, that shears the morion's steely fence.
Yes ! o'er that human flood, hoarse-voic'd and high
He, dauntless, flash'd the soul-enkindled eye ;

With his brave guns, outvoic'd their hellish roar :
Then fir'd the train :—and rush and yells are o'er.

Oh ! mourn him not. Keep tears for him, whom Age
Finds with a blank in Glory's glowing page.
He is not dead, whose name, from Beauty's eye
Calls sparkling light, bids youthful hearts leap high.
No tears for him. But let his column rise
Inwreath'd with oak, the youthful victor's prize :
No shatter'd shaft : but perfect, polish'd, sound,
For him, who fill'd life's history, at a bound.
There laurels plant, and let the palm-tree spread
O'er the thrice-honour'd ground, her sacred head.
Nor be green turf, nor pleasant shade forgot,
That youth and maid may haunt the smiling spot ;
And hoary Age to prattling Childhood tell
How dear his fame, who for his country fell.
Nor grudge, sad hearts, the son, the brother ta'en ;
Nor deem, such offering e'er was made in vain.
Heroes, from hero-blood, exultant rise
On India's plains, as 'neath Achaia's skies.
From hundreds three, who plung'd Death's gulf, to bliss,
Sprang victors for Mycalè's strand and world-fam'd Salamis.

See where, with soul chivalrous ⁵⁴ as of yore
To fame or death the red-cross champion bore :

Where wolf-like yell around yon' mansion lone
Th' infuriate host,—who, king-like holds his throne,
The terrac'd roof? Who, singly, proudly stands,
Death dealing forth, as with a hundred hands?
Hopeless of succour, yet disdaining flight;
No friendly eye, to cheer him in the fight;
No truthful tongue his gallantry to tell,
How hero-like he fought, how, dauntless, fell;
He shrinks not, swerves not, from the stern, firm part
His country claims, and prompts his British heart.
Meets, with proud crest, the deadly storm of balls
And, grim as lion worn with slaughter, falls.⁵⁵

But who yon' chief, so proud of port and eye
Up the arm'd breach leads England's chivalry?
All hearts march with him, blithe in life and power
As bridegroom, climbing to the nuptial bower.
Ask ye his name? 'Tis voic'd of ev'ry tongue,
Theme of the old and glory of the young.
Ask, at each stricken field of that far plain,
Which Indus fetters in his six-fold ⁵⁶ chain:
Ask the slow peasant, toiling at the sod,
Who won that field of glory and of blood.
His answer, 'Nicholson:' and that proud name
Lights up his eye with all-unwonted flame.
'There stood the hero, thence perus'd the fight,
And there swept thund'ring in resistless might.'

Of all, who glean'd on those blood-delug'd plains
Crosses and stars what record now remains ? ;
While he, whose breast so gemm'd with honor shone,
No space was left for labels of renown,
From sire to son a household name shall last,
When men recount brave deeds of ages past.

Ah ! whose yon' pale, cold,⁵⁷ mangled form, that lies
Begirt with anxious hearts and streaming eyes ?
The cannon's roar, the murderous foeman's yell,
The shrieking shot and boom of bursting shell
The while unheeded ; as with drooping head,
Each hangs, soul-stricken, o'er th' illustrious Dead.
Dead ! Aye, 'tis all of him Death's spite could mar :
Like the glad spirit of the morning star,
His soul diffus'd afar its healing might,
And fill'd each den of woe, with life and light.

'Mid all his cares, for that new Empire,⁵⁸ plann'd,
Wrought, balanc'd, rul'd and guided by his hand,
His ear found space, for each sad suppliant's plain
And none e'er pleaded for his rights, in vain.
Thro' the wild chaos of misrule and Night
He walk'd and left, peace, harmony and light.
His eye explor'd each mind, perus'd each heart :
His faultless skill to each assign'd his part.

His large soul, like th' electric current ran
Sparkling, from rank to rank, from man to man :
Inspiring, nerving, kindling, as it flow'd :
Till one bright soul in many bosoms glow'd :
And all seem'd faculties of that rare mind,
Had wrought that system fair, from Chaos, crude and blind.

Thou 'rt fall'n, as heroes ever love to fall
Firm at thy post, rever'd and mourn'd of all ;
Propping an Empire, thou so long had'st blest
With the wise counsels of thy dauntless breast.
The rugged warrior, old to scenes of blood,
Gaz'd on thy lifeless form, in wilder'd mood :
Felt strange, at heart love's reverential glow
And press'd his lips on thy pale, hero brow.

Rest thee in peace great Heart. The tide of war
Hoarse surging round, shall not thy slumber mar.
Long, hard thy toil, that others might be blest :
Now, take thy long, deep, welcome spell of rest.
Yea, rest in peace. Tho' fall'n, thy spirit high
Glows at each heart, lights up each dauntless eye,
In man's stern glance and woman's gentler might.

Not vain thy toil, thy Heav'n-repos'd trust.
Earth, in amaze, shall watch that matchless fight
And victory's shout rise, glorious, o'er thy dust.

Proud, in the ranks with such high names to stand :
Escap'd half-heal'd, his kind preserver's hand ;
Vernon, with wound still green, had foremost prest
Where'er Death frown'd or Honor rear'd her crest.
Had propt, thrice-honor'd task, young Battye's head
'Ere that pure, patriot ⁵⁹ soul from Earth was fled :
Had seen, 'neath Delhi's hard-contested wall,
Our high-soul'd Nicholson, triumphant, fall :
And, to the rescue of the Fair and Free,
Had follow'd Britain's all-redoubted Three ;
Till, his war-eagles, Clyde flesh'd high with Victory. }

NOTES

NOTES.



Note 1, page 8, line 3. 'Life's author.'

The Hindoos have recognised this truth, in making the God of Destruction, one with the author of Generation.

Note 2, page 8, line 8. 'Abba Sind.'

Abba Sind, 'father Indus,' fondly so termed by those who dwell upon his flood.

Note 3, page 10, line 10. 'O'er the ethereal.'

The great depth of this valley lends its atmosphere the effect of water.

Note 4, page 10, line 14. 'Bright shield.'

Pools of water, bringing to mind the words, attributed to Solomon, and somewhat coarsely rendered into English, 'Thine eyes are like the fish-pools in Heshbon.'

Note 5, page 10, line 17. 'Wandering river.'

The River Sootlej, traceable to the distance of 110 miles.

Note 6, page 13, line 3. 'The virgin spire.'

Written in 1830, when as yet no church had been built on the Sub-Himalayan slopes.

Note 7, page 13, line 18. 'Fluttering moss-wreaths.'

At some of our sanatoria in the Sub-Himalaya, ere they became overcrowded, the oaks were all densely felted with moss, which drooped from the horizontal branches. At Mhassoo especially, where the noblest forest in the world has since been grubbed up by potato planters, streamers of a delicate white parasite, more than six feet in length, hung, floating like scarves of gauze, from the branches of a gigantic variety of Larch.

Note 8, page 24, line 2. 'His spotted form, obscure.'

The leopard is still very common in the neighbourhood of our hill sanatoria in the Sub-Himalaya. In 1866 the Author knew of four leopards living in the Mountain of Simla, one of which had cubs in a cavern very difficult of access. When this poem was written in 1831, it was almost certain death for a dog to be abroad long after nightfall, at that station. Happily, the leopard does not look upon man as his natural prey, and unless attacked by him, will seldom molest him.

Note 9, page 35, line 2. 'And scoundrel victory crowns the foulest cheat.'

Such, in nine cases of ten, is the result of an Afghaun campaign. As soon as the armies are met, the Generals, both heartily disinclined to fight, seek to outswear and outwit one another. A conference is proposed: each seeking to persuade the other to visit him. Holy men are sent, to and fro, bearing the most renowned copies procurable of the Koraun. For there is an immense difference in the respective sanctity of different copies. In the copy sent, the General has registered and solemnly sealed, in the presence of witnesses, the most terrible

imprecations upon himself and all his family, should he deceive the other. Sooner or later one of the parties gives in : for, the alternative is battle. He visits the enemy, under the most solemn guarantee, and is inevitably murdered : his army dispersing in peace. It might be supposed, that treachery so constantly practised would defeat itself. But such is not the case. If we are to follow Masson, Doost Muhummud was superior to his countrymen, in surpassing them in treachery and sacrilege. Ferrer, in his most valuable 'Caravan Journeyings,' shows us that Afghauns, far from deeming treachery a reproach, exult in it, under the title of 'Afghaunie.' The Afghaun is as brave as his neighbours. But as, in his country, no reproach attaches to him who turns tail : and as no man likes being killed ; he never stands, if he can possibly help it.

Note 10, page 35, line 4. 'Th' Huzāra prodigal of guesthood's rite.'

The singular species of hospitality attributed to all the Tribes of Huzāras, is said by some, to exist at present, in only a single Tribe. The Huzāras are said to claim an especial dispensation from Ali, son-in-law of Muhummud, for its practice ; without which, they would not have joined his standard.

Note 11, page 35, line 11. 'Opes to his foot.'

This has sometimes been done unwisely. The Author in 1843 had, for guest, an Adventurer of the lowest character ; who, by his own account, had on Foreign recommendations, been allowed admittance to many Native courts. He was with little doubt a spy—but not for the Nation to which he belonged.

Note 12, page 46, line 16. 'Of Doorga, Death's inexorable queen.'

The Goddess, termed by the Hindoos Doorga (The difficult of Access) : Kāli (death) : Devi (*the Goddess par excellence*) : Parvāti (the Mountain-born) is the special object of worship, throughout the

South-Western slope of the Sub-Himalaya. The most desolate and inaccessible points are preferred for her shrines. The most remarkable, known to the Author, is that, surmounting the principal peak of Mount Sharlie, 10,000 feet above the sea's level, and scarped with tremendous precipices. It is about 28 miles from Simla. The arrival of the British put a stop to the murder of infants, as offerings at this shrine. When the once pure deism of the Hindoo had been split into a trinity, to be subdivided and multiplied, at the caprice of its votaries, the Destructive faculty of the Triad was selected by the majority for especial honour: so much more is the human heart actuated by fear, than by love or gratitude. Doorga is wife to Shihv, god of destruction, and the husband being a drunkard, the Hindoo naturally appealed in preference to his sober half.

Note 13, page 56, line 17.

'The foremost claimed those mountains for his own,
Or hills as mighty, scenes as wild and lone.'

The presence in Nepaul of the ex-queen of the Punjaub, whose intrigues had twice already shaken our Indian Empire, gave the mutinous Sipahis the strongest assurance of aid from thence. Had Jungh Bhadoor been a whit less prudent or absolute, those hopes must have been realised. Of the Sikhs, only the fallen chiefs were, we believe, engaged in this conspiracy.

Note 14, page 57, line 10. 'On Nunda's peak, and beard of ample flow.'

Nunda, 25,749 feet high, was long supposed to be King of the Himalayan Giants. It is, however, excelled by Mount Everest, 29,000 feet.

*Note 15, page 59, line 7. 'When o'er the Stronghold of these Lords
of War.'*

Fort William, the capture of which (thrice all but accomplished)

was the preconcerted signal for the rise of the Native Army throughout India

Note 16, page 60, line 5. 'The Lions of the plain, whose rallying word.'

The Sikh of the present day styles himself 'Singh' or Lion; he is given to Rodomontade. Of the Sikhs, only the fallen chiefs are believed to have been concerned in this conspiracy.

Note 17, page 61, line 3. 'Peshawur.'

Called by Afghauns Pekawur. As if Pookhtoo awur, the door of Pookhtoo or Pushtoo, the language of Afghauns.

Note 18, page 61, line 4. 'Mālwa's.'

Malawa on the Southern border of the River Sootlej.

Note 19, page 61, line 4. 'Huzāra's.'

Huzāra lying between the Indus and Jelum; a mountainous region, terrible to the Sikhs, for their signal and bloody defeat when led by their champion Hurri Singh.

Note 20, page 61, line 7. 'Hateful throne.'

The Muhummudan Throne of Delhi.

Note 21, page 61, line 11. 'Though he.'

Major-General Sir Henry Lawrence, K.C.B.

Note 22, page 61, line 19. 'Khālsa.'

Khālsa, the Sikh community.

Note 23, page 62, line 4. 'Floats your broad banner.'

Neither of these conditions was fulfilled: tho' freely promised.

Note 24, page 62, line 9. 'Those grov'ling eyes.'

This description applies to the Maharatha *Brahmun*, not to the Maharathas generally.

Note 25, page 64, line 9. 'Ripe for revolt; their arrogance full blown.'

The disorganisation of the Indian Army was commenced by Lord William Bentinck in 1829. Finding that the Sipahis were alarmed at the bad faith evinced to the junior officers of the Army: and little knowing or trusting the loyalty of the latter: he devised, as he supposed, the means of securing a separate and paramount influence over the Sipahis, by rendering their officers powerless and of course contemptible in their eyes. The insane system, devised by him, was steadily followed by his successors in command; rather perhaps from love of patronage, than from distrust. Its effect was triumphant; so far as contempt of soldier for officer was concerned. But the natural consequence which any one acquainted with Asiatics might have foreseen, was to render the Sipahi Army uncontrollable. And thus, disorganized, they became ready tools of the Native Princes, whom a new system of *good* faith, unknown to our fathers, had led us to deprive of the rights we had tacitly guaranteed.

Note 26, page 65, line 7. 'New coin'd laws deny
Old rites. And Brahmuns' daughters, spouseless, die.'

The Cooleen is the highest family of Brahmuns. As it is a reproach and a curse to the Hindoo, to have a daughter unmarried after the age of puberty, such daughters were offered with suitable dowries, as wives to Cooleens. A Cooleen had, sometimes, as many as 300 of these wives, who were treated with respect, and who, but for this means of effacing a reproach more terrible than death itself, to them-

selves and their parents, would probably have been murdered in infancy. Not having seen the ordonnance, which the speaker supposes to have past Council, we cannot vouch for the justice of his apprehensions. But a belief at that time existed, in the European as well as Native community, that this privilege of the Cooleens was to be annulled. Much evil, no doubt, accompanied its inevitable abuse. But caste superstitions are beyond the jurisdiction of a foreign legislature, and cannot be assailed without risk of the most serious civil convulsions. Education must be looked to for their redress. In this case, the alarm of the Hindoo was shared by the Moosulmaun, who equally offends Christian taste by a plurality of wives.

Note 27, page 65, line 8. 'Brahmun's daughters.'

Alluding to an act, believed to be then before Council, for limiting the number of wives of the Cooleen Brahmun. See note No. 26.

*Note 28, page 65, line 13. 'Thenceforth are driven,
Outcasts on Earth, without a place in Heaven.'*

Alluding to a detestable practice introduced latterly into *some* of our jails, of obliging outcasts and prisoners of high caste to eat together. So that in a country where the organization of false evidence renders a prisoner's presence in jail no proof of guilt, the high-caste prisoner, whether guilty or innocent, was, in addition to the punishment awarded him by law, subjected to the far more terrible penalty of deprivation of his birthright on Earth and his hopes of Heaven.

Note 29, page 66, line 9. 'Bread-bestower.'

Un-dāta. Bread giver.

Note 30, page 66, line 14. 'Vishwakurma.'

Vishwa Kurma, Architect of the Gods.



Note 31, page 66, line 15. 'Calcutta yields her palaces and halls.'

Whatever in early days of British rule may have been the wisdom of congregating in Calcutta, all the disaffected princes and nobles of India, the institution of steam communication, of telegraphs, and, above all, of a Native press, has materially altered the effect of this measure. For although those elegant extracts are supposed to be under surveillance, it is impossible to prevent their collusion with the agents of foreign and inimical states; and (by aid of hungry limbs of the Law) of their setting afoot treasonable enterprises, without incurring risk to themselves, or to their possessions. And there can be no reasonable doubt that the convulsion, miscalled the 'Sipahi Mutiny,' was concocted in Calcutta.

Note 32, page 67, line 4. 'Ditch.'

The Mahratta Ditch around Calcutta.

Note 33, page 67, line 5. 'Maun.'

This, the most dangerous of the rebel Talookdars of Oude, came to Calcutta at this time to concert measures with his colleagues there.

Note 34, page 67, line 11. 'Our brother.'

Singh or Lion. The title assumed by the 'Sikh' or Disciple of the present day.

Note 35, page 67, line 13. 'This White Disease.'

During the Sipahi Mutiny, in the placards at Calcutta and elsewhere, the British were designated the 'White plague' or Leprosy of the Land.

Note 36, page 67, line 15. 'No power the Moslem boasts, save *that*,
we give.'

When the British entered India the Muhummedan power was at its dregs, and we put the finishing stroke to its hopes of recovery. The Maharattas had obtained the ascendancy. They are, we need not say, Hindoos. In the Native Army, the vast preponderance of Hindoos over Moosulmauns, made it certain, that in case of the success of the Mutineers, the sovereignty of India would have reverted to Hindoo hands. The Moosulmauns being used by that race, merely as tools. Of the Hindoo potentates, Scindia was the most powerful.

Note 37, page 68, line 6. 'Stronghold.'

Fort William.

Note 38, page 68, line 15. 'In sign of this, decreed the comet dire.'

This comet had been foretold by European Astronomers for the year 1857. The Hindoos, who can calculate eclipses, know nothing of the motions of comets. It may hint to us how much aid the plot of 1856 received from European craft, to know that this comet was announced by the conspirators for 1857, as a sign sent from Heaven to signify the downfall of the British Empire in India. Had it appeared, as expected, in 1857, it must have added greatly to our difficulties: for it proved the most terrible and portentous comet in the memory of Man. But, happily, it dallied to gossip with one of the planets, and did not appear until June 1858, when the mutiny was nearly extinct. A remarkable comet followed the Cabul massacre. Thus reversing the order of events, as read by superstition.

Note 39, page 69, line 9. 'To aid our vast designs, the frozen North.'

It was believed and industriously proclaimed by the Mutineers, that a Russian Force was marching to their aid, through Persia and

Afghanistan. Captain Hodasivich, a Russian officer, in his memoir of the Crimean campaign, states that previous to the battle of the Alma, his corps was believed to be destined for India, *viâ* the Caucasus. If so, Russia must have had confederates in India, or the enterprise would have been foredoomed to destruction. The author of this note had undoubted proof that the organisation of the Sipahi mutiny was proceeding early in 1856. It may, therefore, have been commenced, in a preceding year, during the Crimean War. The march of any Russian force, toward India, could have been useful to Russia only as an encouragement to conspirators already planted in India.

Note 40, page 73, line 9. 'Soon seal.'

Seal, figuratively. Written documents being rarely, if ever, used on such occasions by natives of India.

Note 41, page 78, line 1. 'Dear Nature.'

Stanzas II. to VIII. inclusive have already appeared as a fragment in 'Tales of the Forest,' published 1853.

Note 42, page 92, line 13. 'Organ's shadow-wave.'

The lowest notes of the Apollonicon were recognised rather by the vibration of the air and earth, than by any distinct impression on the auditory nerve.

Note 43, page 97, line 4. 'Huntsman of the sky.'

Orion, the heavenly hunter, whose dogs are Sirius and Procyon. He is a stormy constellation.

Note 44, page 101, line 6. 'On Kâf's.'

Caucasus.

Note 45, page 103, line 18. 'Mask'd, as gosyne.'

The gosyne and jogy are religious mendicant Hindoos.

Note 46, page 104, line 11. 'No mortal guidance marshals them along.'

The first indication of the gigantic effort of the Princes of India to throw off the yoke of Great Britain by means of her Sipahi Army manifested itself in rumours, industriously circulated, that a Rājā had been sent down to Earth, from Heaven, to free the wild chiefs and people of the Sonthāls from the cruel usury of the bankers, with whom all were hopelessly involved in debt. This rumour was greedily received by the half-savage race, whose chiefs were desperate, and who saw, in the supposed 'Outarr,'* a ready deliverance from their bondage.

This prophecy, adapted to the peculiar temper and exigencies of Sonthāls, took another shape in its wide dissemination through the ranks of the Native Army and throughout the land. There, emissaries announced that Heaven had limited the British sway to one hundred years, which would expire on June 22, 1857, the anniversary of the battle of Plassie. 'Therefore,' it was argued, 'however good might, hitherto, have been the pay and service of the British, however just their rule, it was madness to adhere to a cause which Heaven had condemned. And it behoved all sensible men to look for new masters, who would be found in their own old Rājās and Nawaubs.' It was hoped that the Native troops would sympathise with the Sonthāls. But, disorganised as they had long been, the troops had no real cause for dissatisfaction, and until the watchword of the greased cartridge was hit upon, by the insurgents, in the subsequent year 1857, no active demonstration of the troops could be effected.

The Sonthāls were selected, as being near the conspirators, many of whom were in Calcutta, and under a certain degree of surveillance.

* Outarr signifies the descent of a god, in the human or beatal form. I write the word as it is pronounced; we generally spell it Avatar.

The Sonthāl country also was strong, and required a large force for its reduction. One of the exiled Sindhe Princes had purchased lands in the Sonthāl district. When the plot had failed and with it his last hope of recovering his freedom, he died suddenly: it is believed, by his own hand. We may here observe, that in the original plot, all depended upon the capture of Fort William, which had nearly been accomplished so early as January 1857, and thrice subsequently; the capture having each time been averted by one of those fatalities, which we term accidents. Had it in any case succeeded, the consequences had been most disastrous.

Note 47, page 110, line 1. 'Sweet shadow.'

A sketch from Nature, but taken in Malwa, A.D. 1830.

Note 48, page 116, line 6. 'Like a garland rare.'

Him-māla signifies 'snow garland.'

Note 49, page 117, line 7. 'Thine own sweet constellation's sevenfold.'
The Pleiades.

Note 50, page 122, line 18. 'One by one.'

This farewell was published in 1853, in 'Tales of the Forest.'

Note 51, page 132, line 5. 'Yet breasting, there, the billows.'

A pass, which in 1831 and later answered to this description, has since been so greatly altered as to be scarcely recognisable. The Author, who in those days journeyed always afoot, and had to wade this torrent, has often found difficulty in stemming it, even when not much swollen. There was, indeed, even then, a capital suspension bridge; but, for some mysterious reason, it was hung a mile or two off the road. What the pass has gained in convenience and safety, it has lost in romantic interest.

Note 52, page 219, line 2. 'Dauntless Band.'

Eight in number.

Note 53, page 219, line 9. 'War-blade's fire.'

Steel is tempered by the plunge, at red heat, into water, which hardens by crystallising its fibre.

Note 54, page 220, line 23. 'Chivalrous.'

The dictionaries place the accent on the first syllable of this word, but my ear and judgment give it to the second.

Note 55, page 221, line 12. 'Grim as lion worn with slaughter, falls.'

The name of this heroic civilian, need we say, was Robert Tudor Tucker, Judge of Futtehpoor.

Note 56, page 221, line 20. 'Six-fold chain.'

Such was the impression made by Nicholson's undaunted spirit upon the minds of the Sikh soldiery and the peasantry of the Punjaub, that every gallant deed, no matter by whom achieved, was ascribed by them to him. And a new sect of Hindoos sprang up, calling themselves Nicholysnee, and singing his exploits as those of a fresh avatar.

Note 57, page 222, line 7. 'Whose yon' pale, cold, mangled form.'

For those alone not conversant with the history of India at this period, it can be needful to name Henry Lawrence.

Note 58, page 222, line 17. 'New Empire.'

The Punjaub.

Note 59, page 224, line 6. 'Pure, patriot soul.'

Nearly his last words, cheerfully and playfully uttered, were *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.



